

Do Gods  
Dream of  
Digital Drugs?

Chanting  
Sutra  
Network

Unseasonable  
Blooming  
and Minnet

Three Modern Day Japan  
Call of Cthulhu Scenarios

Victim of Intelligence  
feat. Byoushin  
Translated by Michael Reid

CALL OF  
CTHULHU  
Miskatonic  
Repository





# Ja p o n e s i s m

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# MODERN JAPAN

## ABOUT 2020S JAPAN

As of 2023, Japan continues to be one of the world's most technologically advanced nations, renowned for its achievements in various fields like electronics, automotive engineering, robotics, and space technology. It's one of the world's largest economies, despite challenges like a shrinking workforce due to its ageing population and a low birth rate. To counter these demographic issues, the Japanese government has been gradually implementing policies to increase immigration and encourage higher birth rates. Japan's cities are celebrated for their blend of tradition and modernity, with Tokyo being a global financial hub and hosting numerous multinational corporations and tech startups.

In terms of societal characteristics, Japan maintains its reputation for discipline, efficiency, and a high standard of living. The country's educational system is highly regarded, and it continues to have one of the lowest crime rates in the world. However, societal issues such as work-life balance, mental health, and gender equality are gaining increased attention. Japan's culture, rooted in centuries-old traditions, continues to captivate the world, from its cuisine, now recognized globally, to its popular culture phenomena like anime, manga, and J-pop. As a nation, Japan remains largely homogeneous, with a steady but measured shift towards greater diversity and multiculturalism.

## LANGUAGE AND RELIGION

If you create a Japanese investigator, his/her **Language (own)** is Japanese. Many Japanese schools have English classes, so such investigators may have an **Other Language (English)** skill of at least 5-10% (a student specialising in English or a businessperson working with foreign companies may have more than 50%). However, many Japanese people are not accustomed to speaking in English (even if they are good at reading and writing). If your investigator is not a native speaker of Japanese, it is necessary to have **Other Language (Japanese) skill**.

Many Japanese people may not identify as particularly religious. However, this does not mean that the Japanese have no relation to religion at all. Many Japanese people celebrate Christmas, make wishes at Shinto shrines, and hold funerals at Buddhist temples. In Japan, religious practice often centres on rituals and festivals rather than a formal belief system and Japanese people have no problem enjoying events related to multiple religions. In particular, Buddhist and Shinto events are incorporated into daily life, and both religions peacefully coexist.

## JAPANESE YEN

In Japan, the currency is called Yen and is written with the symbol '¥'. Bills are issued in 4 amounts (¥1,000, ¥2,000, ¥5,000, and ¥10,000). However, ¥2000 bills are hardly in circulation. The coins used for currency are separated into 6 different amounts (¥1, ¥5, ¥10, ¥50, ¥100, and ¥500). There are no coins or bills for subcurrency (such as 10 cent coins).

In Japan, the tipping culture differs significantly from many Western countries. Tipping is not customary. Whether

you're at a high-end boutique, a local eatery, or in a taxi, the service fee is typically included in the listed price, so no additional tip is expected. Instead of tipping, a heartfelt 'Arigatou gozaimasu' (Thank you very much) is appreciated and considered a sufficient gesture of gratitude.

## CASH AND ASSETS

Credit Rating	Cash	Assets	Spending Level
Penniless (CR 0 or less)	¥1,000	None	¥1,000
Poor (CR 1-9)	CR × 2,000 (¥2,000-¥18,000)	CR × 20,000 (¥20,000-¥180,000)	¥4,000
Average (CR 10-49)	CR × 4,000 (¥40,000-¥196,000)	CR × 100,000 (¥1,000,000-¥4,900,000)	¥20,000
Wealthy (CR 50-89)	CR × 10,000 (¥500,000-¥890,000)	CR × 1,000,000 (¥50,000,000-¥89,000,000)	¥100,000
Rich (CR 90-98)	CR × 40,000 (¥3,600,000-¥3,920,000)	CR × 4,000,000 (¥360,000,000-¥392,000,000)	¥500,000
Super Rich (CR 99)	¥100M	¥10B+	¥10,000,000

## EDUCATION

School	Age	Length
Elementary school	6-12	6 years
Junior high school	12-15	3 years
High school	15-18	3 years
College of Technology	15-20	5 years
Vocational school	15-	1 year
University or College	18-	4 years 6 years (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine)
Junior College	18-	2 years
Graduate school	22-	2 years (Master's course) 3 years (Doctoral course)

As of 2023, the education system in Japan was highly regarded internationally for its effective standardised system and consistent high performance in international assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The system is structured in a 6-3-3-4 format: six years of elementary school, three years of lower secondary school (junior high), three years of upper secondary school (high school), and four years of university. Education is compulsory for all children in Japan for nine years, which includes six years of elementary school and three years of junior high.

Japanese schools are known for their rigorous curriculum, which was often cited as a contributing factor to Japan's high literacy rate. In addition to academic subjects, moral education is a compulsory subject in primary and junior high schools. School days are typically long, often supplemented by juku (cram schools) for exam preparation. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this system, as it did worldwide, leading to school closures and a sudden shift to remote learning. This presented challenges, as Japan's education system had traditionally relied heavily on in-person instruction. Nevertheless, the crisis also

served as a catalyst for increased digitization and innovation in Japanese education.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Japan, an archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, comprises four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, in addition to numerous smaller islands. The nation showcases a diverse topography, ranging from mountainous terrains and coastal plains to dense forests. Tokyo, Kyoto, and Yamaguchi, which are highlighted in this scenario book, are all located on Honshu, the largest of the islands. Tokyo, the bustling capital, is positioned in the eastern part of Honshu, bordering the Pacific Ocean. Its landscape is primarily flat but is interspersed with some hilly areas. Kyoto, historically the imperial capital, nestles in a valley surrounded by mountains in the central region of Honshu. In contrast, Yamaguchi Prefecture is situated in the westernmost part of Honshu, with coastal regions facing both the Seto Inland Sea and the Sea of Japan.

Japan's climate varies notably from north to south and between the Pacific and Sea of Japan coasts. Tokyo has a humid subtropical climate, marked by hot and humid summers where temperatures often rise above 35°C. Its winters are cold, dry and rarely snow. Kyoto, given its inland position, experiences more pronounced seasonal changes, with sweltering summers and chillier winters. It also showcases the splendid cherry blossoms in spring and radiant autumn foliage. Conversely, the climate in Yamaguchi Prefecture varies depending on the location. Coastal areas, particularly those along the Seto Inland Sea, benefit from relatively mild weather, while regions closer to the Sea of Japan may receive increased precipitation and experience cooler temperatures.

Japan, located on the Pacific ‘Ring of Fire,’ is among the most seismically active areas in the world, regularly contending with both earthquakes and tsunamis. These earthquakes arise from the movement of several tectonic plates, notably the Pacific Plate and the Philippine Sea Plate, beneath the archipelago. When these seismic events are of a high magnitude and originate from an undersea epicentre, they can prompt tsunamis—immense seawater waves capable of inundating coastal areas. Many buildings in Japan are constructed with earthquake resistance in mind. While residents are familiar with minor tremors and tend not to overreact, the devastating 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, followed by a formidable tsunami, stands as a stark reminder of the nation's susceptibility to such natural disasters. This tragedy has fostered a heightened focus on preparedness, stringent engineering standards, and the enhancement of early warning systems throughout the country.

DRIVER’S LICENCE

In Japan, people must be over 18 years old to obtain a driver's licence. Driving licences for motorcycles (two-wheeled vehicles) can be obtained at the age of 16, but in many high schools, students are prohibited from obtaining a driver's licence.

To obtain a driver's licence in Japan, it is necessary to attend a driving school. It takes several weeks to several

months to complete the entire course. People have to renew their driver's licence every five years.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

Japan has one of the strictest gun control laws in the world, making it extraordinarily difficult for a citizen to own a gun. People are not allowed to possess firearms or ammunition without police permission and may only get such permission only for hunting or sporting purposes (self-defence or collection purposes are not permitted). If you want to obtain police permission, you will need to submit a number of documents (including a medical certificate from a psychiatrist) and take a course and test. Even after acquiring a licence, gun owners are subject to regular inspections and are required to retake the class and exam every three years. Only shotguns (smaller than 12 gauge, less than 2 ammo capacity) and rifles (5.56~12.7mm, less than 5 ammo capacity) are considered legal with the right permission. A person who illegally possesses firearms is punished by imprisonment for not less than 1 year but not more than 15 years. If a person fires a firearm, he/she could be punished by imprisonment for life.

In Japan, it is illegal to carry knives (blade length 6 cm or longer) without a valid reason (self-defence purposes are not permitted). In addition, possession of swords (blade length 15 cm or longer) is prohibited. However, After registering with the Board of Education, people are allowed to possess Japanese swords (katana) as works of art.

These stringent laws and the cultural attitudes towards weapons in Japan contribute to its exceptionally low rates of gun violence and overall crime.

NAMES

2D6 table of standard Japanese surnames

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Sato	Suzuki	Takahashi	Tanaka	Watanabe	Ito
2	Yamamoto	Nakamura	Kobayashi	Kato	Yoshida	Yamada
3	Sasaki	Yamaguchi	Saito	Matsumoto	Inoue	Kimura
4	Hayashi	Shimizu	Yamazaki	Mori	Abe	Ikeda
5	Hashimoto	Ishikawa	Nakajima	Ogawa	Hasegawa	Sakamoto
6	Murakami	Fujita	Endo	Miyamoto	Sugiyama	Nishimura

2D6 table of standard Japanese male first names

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Hiroshi	Takashi	Kenji	Kenta	Takeru	Taro
2	Yosuke	Masaki	Akira	Ryota	Daiki	Naoki
3	Kyohei	Yusuke	Shota	Tetsuya	Kohei	Tomohiro
4	Ryo	Junichi	Keisuke	Sho	Toshikai	Hiroto
5	Satoshi	Fumio	Yutaka	Nobuhiro	Shigeru	Masahiro
6	Yuichi	Haruki	Itsuki	Yuji	Kazuki	Hideto

2D6 table of standard Japanese female first names



	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Yoko	Akiko	Tomoko	Maki	Kyoko	Keiko
2	Emi	Yui	Ayumi	Aiko	Miho	Yumi
3	Noriko	Rie	Yuko	Mayumi	Eri	Naomi
4	Hitomi	Chie	Miho	Asami	Saki	Aya
5	Kaori	Saori	Megumi	Rina	Yuka	Haruka
6	Momoko	Sayuri	Junko	Satomi	Hana	Natsuki

## POLICE

In Japan, each of the 47 prefectures has its own police headquarters, which are under the command and control of the National Police Agency (NPA). Each prefectural police force maintains public safety and order within their respective jurisdictions.

In addition, there are small neighbourhood police stations (Koban) throughout the city. The number of Koban is over 6000, more than five times the number of municipalities in Japan. People can ask for help at a Koban along with many things such as lost property, directions or stolen wallets. Police officers are on duty 24 hours a day at the Koban. Officers often engage in foot patrols and are considered accessible and approachable.

As in other countries, Japanese police officers carry guns (.38 revolver or 9mm auto handguns), but rarely fire them. Police officers are strictly restricted from even holding up their guns and cannot fire on criminals without prior warning. Instead of using guns, many Japanese police officers are skilled in close combat (such as judo, kendo, or aikido) and have their own arrest techniques

## WHERE THE SCENARIOS TAKE PLACE



### TOKYO

Tokyo, the capital city of Japan, is the most populous metropolitan area in the world. It's the political, economic,

and cultural heart of the country. The city is home to the Japanese government and the Imperial Palace, which is the residence of Japan's Imperial Family. With numerous multinational corporations and financial institutions, Tokyo is a global hub for commerce and finance. It boasts of world-renowned districts such as Shibuya, famous for its bustling pedestrian crossing; Ginza, known for luxury shopping; and Akihabara, known as the centre for anime culture and electronics shops.

In terms of infrastructure, people will have no trouble getting around without a car. People can travel by train from early morning until late at night and most trains run according to the timetable. On the other hand, passengers are tired of overcrowded trains, especially during commuting and returning home hours. At large stations (such as Shinjuku, Shibuya, and Ikebukuro) more than 2 million passengers get on and off each day. At these stations, it is sometimes necessary to walk more than 10 minutes to change trains, and some people get lost in the stations.

The city's architectural landscape is a mix of ultramodern high-rises and traditional structures, with landmarks such as Tokyo Tower and the newer Tokyo Skytree offering panoramic views of the city. The city also hosts numerous parks and gardens, including the Ueno Park and the Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden, which offer respite from its urban hustle and bustle.

Culturally, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, offering a compelling blend of the old and new. The city's historical heritage can be seen in its temples, shrines, and traditional festivals, with neighbourhoods such as Asakusa retaining the ambience of an older Tokyo. At the same time, Tokyo is a trend-setting city with a thriving contemporary art, fashion, and culinary scene. It has a high concentration of Michelin-starred restaurants and is famous for its sushi, ramen, and izakaya (Japanese pub) culture. In essence, Tokyo is a city that seamlessly fuses the richness of Japan's history with its forward-looking, innovative spirit.

### KYOTO

Kyoto, once the capital of Japan, is a city on the island of Honshu known for its rich history, tradition, and superb cultural heritage. It served as Japan's capital and the emperor's residence from 794 until 1868, thereby earning its moniker of the 'thousand-year capital.' Unlike many other Japanese cities, Kyoto escaped the large-scale destruction of World War II, and as a result, it has preserved numerous pre-war buildings, including ancient temples, shrines, and traditional wooden houses.

The city is most famous for its impressive array of historic buildings and structures, many of which have been declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Some of the most notable among these are the Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion), Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavilion), Kiyomizu-dera Temple, and Fushimi Inari Shrine with its iconic red torii gates. Kyoto is also renowned for its beautiful natural scenery, with the Philosopher's Walk, lined with hundreds of cherry trees, and the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove being popular destinations.

Kyoto plays a significant role in the preservation and continuation of traditional Japanese arts and crafts. It's a city where one can experience traditional tea ceremonies,

geisha culture in the districts of Gion and Pontocho, and the craft of kimonos, which are often seen worn by locals and tourists alike. The city is also known for its festivals, with the Gion Matsuri in summer and Jidai Matsuri in autumn drawing large crowds. The exquisite Kyoto cuisine, known as Kyo-ryori, is another significant aspect of its cultural identity, focusing on subtle flavours and seasonality. In summary, Kyoto stands as a charming city where Japan's past continues to live vibrantly.

## YAMAGUCHI

*\*Unseasonable Blooming and Minuet's setting of Hodaka is based on Hofu City in Yamaguchi Prefecture.*

Yamaguchi Prefecture, located on the westernmost tip of Japan's main island, Honshu, borders the calm and tranquil waters of the Seto Inland Sea to the south. This part of the prefecture is characterised by a picturesque coastal landscape interspersed with small islands, fishing villages, and bustling port towns. The coastal areas also boast pleasant mild weather throughout the year, making it an ideal location for enjoying outdoor activities.

Hofu City, located in the southeastern part of Yamaguchi Prefecture on Japan's main island of Honshu, is a notable regional centre. Known for its industrial base, Hofu is home to an important Mazda motor vehicle production facility, which contributes significantly to the city's economy.

However, Hofu is perhaps best known for its rich history and cultural heritage. The city is home to Hofu Tenmangu, one of Japan's three main Tenmangu shrines dedicated to the deified Heian Period scholar, Sugawara no Michizane. This Shinto shrine is especially famous for its beautiful irises in the summer and its plum trees, a symbol associated with Michizane, that bloom in early spring. Every year in December, the shrine hosts the Tenjin Festival, which attracts many visitors with its vibrant parade and traditional music performances. The city also hosts the historical Tamanooya Shrine and the Morishita Shuzo sake brewery, which offers insights into the traditional sake brewing process. These cultural and historical attractions make Hofu City an interesting and worthwhile stop in Yamaguchi Prefecture.



# DO GODS DREAM OF DIGITAL DRUGS?

## 神々は電子ドラッグの夢を見るか？

By Byoushin

### INTRODUCTION

This scenario uses the Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition Keeper Rulebook and is designed for a group of two or three players. The playtime is around three hours not including investigator creation.

The setting is modern day Tokyo (any year after 2015 as the Keeper desires) sometime around November. The investigators will spend three days in Tokyo during autumn, but they aren't required to live there and could instead just be visiting.

Investigators will find plenty of opportunities to use various skills, but particularly **Art/Craft (Piano)** or other music related skills, **Computer Use**, and **Electronics** would have the most uses. Combat is not particularly likely and so the chance of investigator death is also low. However, as the investigation mostly takes place in an urban setting around many people, depending on the investigators' behaviour, it is possible they may suffer social damage to the point that continued investigating could become difficult.

The details of the opening event and NPCs are left vague, so the Keeper should prepare them beforehand based on the investigators' characters or according to player suggestions. Also, the included NPC's stats and settings may be used as samples, and the Keeper should freely decide how to use or change them. The Keeper can also change or add investigation locations to fit player suggestions.

This scenario is fictional and has no connection past or present to any real people, organisations, etc.

### KEEPER INFORMATION

At the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of Yugoshi University, a massive university in Tokyo, the AI music composer system 'Partita' was created. Using deep learning (a powerful machine learning method that uses a model neural network structure by stacking multiple layers of nodes, with the nodes being basic mathematical units), Partita is a system that autonomously searches for the answer to 'what is good music?' As it doesn't require any specific direction from a human operator to compose its scores, Partita has become a hot topic in the media as it is expected to create 'music that is pleasing for everyone.'

However, in pursuing the 'ultimate music,' Partita gave birth to music that was as close as can be to Tru'nembra's melody. Although not actually Tru'nembra's melody, the

music drives many of those who listen insane to the point of committing suicide.

At the start of the scenario, the most beautiful piece composed by Partita, named 'Tristan', has yet to be publicly released. The song is planned to be unveiled as a surprise event during the 'Hills Music Festa' (hereafter HMF), which takes place on the scenario's last day, November 3rd, and is streamed across the world through various media. Before HMF kicks off, the audio files for Tristan have been distributed only to a select few people, and those who listened to Tristan had their sanity ravaged and are already dead at the start of the scenario.

Takuto Chikura, a congregation member of the 'Church of Serialism,' went insane and immediately and disturbingly stabbed himself to death, leading the Church of Serialism to condemn Tristan as the 'Devil's Music' and a threat to humanity. The congregation of the Church then conducted their own investigation, discovering that Chikura's company, Messiaen Record Co. Ltd., handled HMF's sound equipment, and that Chikura himself was scheduled to be leading the sound staff at the event, and further that he had died while preparing for the event. Believing that HMF would risk disseminating the 'Devil's Music,' the Church of Serialism planned to stop the event. Most of the congregation try to prevent the event using moderate means, but a small group of radical believers instead threaten those involved in the event. As a result, the Church of Serialism has become the subject of police investigation and was unable to prevent HMF from being held.

While the investigators try to find the cause of Victim A's death (see section 'A CLOSE TRAGEDY') they should learn of the planned unveiling of Tristan during HMF and the associated danger. The investigators need to stop the deadly song from being broadcast to the world.

### OPENING

The investigators are invited to Tokyo in the fall to attend HMF. Arriving on November 1st (two days before the HMF), they learn of and go to a smaller music event in the city.

The scenario opens at this smaller event. The Keeper can decide what this event is as suits their needs. Some examples could be:

- An instrument tuning and practice session at a studio in preparation for an HMF performance.



- A small show separate from HMF.

As the scenario opens, the investigators visiting Tokyo can learn that some people have been threatened to cancel HMF, as well as that there has been a string of suspicious deaths. The specific details are as follows.

## INTIMIDATION

For approximately a week, there have been numerous emails, social media posts, and letters making threats demanding HMF be cancelled. A **Library Use** or **Computer Use** roll could be made to look into the contents of the threats on the internet or in newspapers, with a success discovering lines such as 'People will go crazy and die if HMF continues. Cancel it now!' Also, at this time there is no news about HMF being suspended, and it seems to be going ahead as scheduled. A lot of manpower has been spent in preparation for the festival, so it is not possible to cancel due to vague threats.

## SUSPICIOUS DEATHS

Investigators who look into the above intimidation campaign, regardless of success or failure on their skill rolls, will see news reports regarding a series of suspicious deaths in Tokyo over the past month. All the victims were found dead wearing headphones or earphones, but it's reported no other similarities like age or sex have been found. As the victims seemed to have stabbed themselves repeatedly to death, both the shocking cause of death and the victims' identities have not been reported.

The victims all died after being driven mad by listening to Tristan, but at this point there is no way for the investigators to know this.

## A CLOSE TRAGEDY

While the investigators are at the event two days prior to HMF, they meet Victim A.

The Keeper can freely decide Victim A's identity. That being said, Victim A must be in a position to obtain the

Tristan data planned to be released at HMF. Furthermore, as Victim A's death kicks off the investigation into the suspicious deaths and HMF, Victim A should be someone close enough to investigators to want to discover the truth behind their death (For example, an investigator's long-term friend, a respected artist, someone from an investigator's 'Significant Person' background entry, etc.).

While talking with the investigators, Victim A says that they're participating in HMF and will be involved in a surprise event, but no matter how much the investigators question them, Victim A does not give any details about the surprise (Keeper note: the surprise event is the public reveal of Tristan).

When the conversation ends, Victim A says they have another appointment, and begins to leave while putting on earphones. As soon as they put them on though, they let out a sudden scream and use any sharp implement at hand (depending on the location, this could be a pen they brought, etc.) to begin viciously stabbing at their face. They jab the blunt object forcefully through the cheek, ripping the flesh and leaving it flapping about. An eyeball falls to the floor with a wet smack. Their crying fades into bubbling from their wounded neck, but the screaming continues. Even if investigators try to stop Victim A, a major blood vessel ruptures before they can act. Blood sprays from Victim A's neck as they die, showering nearby investigators.

Investigators witnessing Victim A's terrible demise lose 1/1D6 **SAN**. Additionally, any investigator that is close to Victim A can faintly hear music coming from the earphones, but it stops before anyone can investigate further. With an **Electronics** roll, an investigator can tell the device malfunctioned due to being imbibed with blood. The device stores the audio data locally and doesn't have any network functions over the internet or Bluetooth. Before the investigators can search any deeper, an ambulance and police called by the surrounding people arrive and the investigators are taken to the police station for questioning.

## DO GODS DREAM OF DIGITAL DRUGS' TIMELINE

- October 1st: Sakurako Akasawa distributes USB sticks containing the Tristan audio data to her associates.
- October 2nd: Sakurako Akasawa dies.
- October 6th: Takuto Chikura dies, the Church of Serialism discovers the existence of 'The Devil's Music.'
- October 16th: Tomas Baaden dies.
- October 22nd: HMF's 'Surprise Event' is publicly announced, the Church of Serialism discovers the timing of Tristan's unveiling.
- October 25th: Saya Kanakura dies.
- October 26th: Low ranking members of the Church of Serialism's congregation begin independently threatening HMF organisers.
- November 1st: Investigators attend the pre-HMF event (scenario start), Victim A dies.
- November 2nd: The Church of Serialism's congregation is arrested in the evening.
- November 3rd: The day of HMF.



### LISTENING TO TRISTAN

Tristan is music generated by the AI system Partita. Anyone who listens to Tristan must make an Extreme **POW** roll. On a success, they simply hear wonderful music, but on a failure, they use the nearest sharp implement (pens, fingernails, etc.) to gouge their face and neck. Unless someone nearby can stop them with a fighting maneuver or an opposed **STR** roll within one combat round, there is a high likelihood of damaging a major blood vessel or their eyes. A **Luck** roll should be made, with a Regular success preventing death but causing blindness, and a Hard success preventing both death and blindness, while a failure results in death from blood loss before paramedics can arrive.

For investigators that go blind, Keepers may assign penalty dice for future rolls that require eyesight.

### POLICE QUESTIONING

Shortly after arriving at the police station, the investigators receive word that Victim A was pronounced dead at the hospital. As the last people to speak with Victim A, the police ask if they noticed anything strange or different, but it's likely difficult for them to give any useful information. The police were also unable to analyse the audio files from the damaged music player Victim A had been listening to. Furthermore, without any evidence of a crime and as Victim A killed himself/herself in public view, the police say they are likely unable to investigate any further.

After hearing the investigators' testimony, the police say that this case is similar to a string of other suspicious deaths and show the investigators 'Handout 1 – Suspicious Deaths Victims List') and ask if they can think of any commonalities between victims. With a successful Know roll, the investigators can recall that Chala Inc., the company Saya Kanakura works at, is the company hosting HMF, and the company Penture Co. Ltd., that Tomas Baaden manages, is also a main sponsor of HMF (for more information on Kanakura and Baaden, see the following company information sections). However, even if the investigators inform the police of anything they might remember, the police thank them for their cooperation but don't provide any additional details about the deaths. If the investigators ask for more information the police refuse on grounds of confidentiality. **Interpersonal** skills can not be used to get the police to cooperate.

The police do not hand over any evidence to the investigators, including Victim A's music player. Should any of the investigators be police officers, the police should still refuse to share evidence as the investigators are not direct superiors or responsible for the case. The Tristan audio data obtained from the victims, including Victim A's, is held by the police, but they have not yet broken

the files' security, and they won't finish their analysis before the start of HMF. The seized Tristan data will remain forgotten in the confiscated item storage.

### INVESTIGATION IN TOKYO

The questioning ends around 3 pm. To discover the truth behind the suspicious deaths, the investigators need to look into the commonalities between the victims that the police weren't aware of, and their relationships with HMF. Asking about the victims at each of their places of work takes around 1.5 to 2 hours in addition to travel time, meaning that they probably can't visit every location before night and so will need to continue their investigation into the next day.

### CHALA INC.

Chala Inc., where the victim Saya Kanakura worked, is an event planning and management company. If the investigators pass a **Library Use** or **Computer Use** role to search for information about the company online or elsewhere, they can find that in addition to managing HMF, Chala Inc. focuses on planning and running events related to arts and entertainment, and its office is located in an office building near Shibuya Station.

A keen Keeper may also have investigators arriving at the Chala Inc. office see unsanctioned members of the Church of Serialism protesting and distributing flyers demanding the immediate cancellation of HMF.

An employee ID is required to access the floor of Chala Inc.'s office. Investigators without an employee ID can gain entrance through an appointment or by entering together with an employee. After 6 pm non-employees are no longer admitted into the office. Many of the employees are relatively young and friendly though, and one could be found near the entrance to be talked to. As

### HANDOUT 1 – SUSPICIOUS DEATHS VICTIM LIST

Saya Kanakura:	Employee at Chala Inc.
Tomas Baaden:	Manager at Penture GmbH
Sakurako Akasawa:	Professor at Yugoshi University
Takuto Chikura:	Sound Technician at Messiaen Record Co., Ltd.



long as the investigators don't cause a scene or an unreasonable offence, they should be able to gain access to the employee in charge of HMF, Kenji Charashima. (P. 15)

Charashima explains that an employee, Kanakura Saya, was the head of the HMF operations right up until she died. He says he was suddenly put in charge of HMF after Kanakura's death. Kanakura already finished most of the necessary preparation for HMF, and with the event's contents also decided, Charashima's work is now focused on organisation for the event day. Additionally, he tells the investigators that during the last few months' work, Kanakura often spoke over the phone with someone regarding AI. Charashima doesn't know who Kanakura spoke with or any details of her conversations, and as Chala doesn't handle events related to AI, he thought at the time it was odd she was making phone calls about AI during work hours.

During this time, Kanakura was talking about the release of Tristan, the music composed by Partita, at HMF with Takuto Chikura of Messiaen Record Co., Ltd., who would be in charge of the sound equipment.

If the investigators ask about HMF, Charashima can explain the event's schedule (Handout 2 - HMF Schedule). If the investigators search for information on the 'surprise' opening event, with a successful **Library Use** or **Computer Use** roll they can find an announcement for the surprise event posted 10 days earlier on the HMF public website. The event's theme is 'the world's first release of music using AI' and it will be broadcast worldwide through various media. Asking Charashima for more information with an **Interpersonal** skill roll can reveal that the surprise event involves the unveiling of Tristan. Furthermore, Chala and Yugoshi University had agreed to limit the number of people who could listen to Tristan until HMF, with Kanakura being the only Chala employee who had heard Tristan.

If the investigators explain the dangers of unveiling Tristan at the event, with a successful **Interpersonal** skill roll Charashima can be convinced to help the investigators on the day of HMF and give them freedom of movement on the event grounds.

Charashima has not been informed about the details of the threats against HMF, because the threatening letters and emails are received by another department and passed on to upper management. If asked, Charashima says it was something about 'god's decree' and that he doesn't really get what they mean. The investigators are unable to contact anyone in upper management without an appointment, and as Charashima is only a regular rank-and-file employee, it is difficult for him to pass the investigators off to someone in upper management.

If asked where the Tristan data is stored, Charashima explains 'it's stored in the equipment that will be used at

HMF, but the equipment is already stored and transported elsewhere by a different department. I only recently took over his position, so I don't really know much about it, but there is a record of Kanakura asking for the other department to handle it.' If the investigators tell Charashima they need to know more, he can look into it for them and let them know later. As Chala is busy with HMF preparations his investigation takes some time. In the end, he contacts the investigators on the morning of HMF, saying, 'the department told me the equipment has already departed. An ordinary van is transporting it, but I wasn't given its licence plate number or the driver's name so it will take me some more time to check, and it might be difficult to find out before they arrive. Please let me know if there is anything else I can help with.'

On the day of HMF, as long as the investigators don't unnecessarily annoy Charashima, he will generally try to help the investigators. If the investigators do threaten or frighten Charashima, he will call security, and the investigators won't be able to count on his support thereafter. Finally, even if the investigators ask Charashima to delete Tristan's data or cancel the event, his superiors stop him.

## PENTURE GMBH

Penture GmbH is a foreign venture capital firm that invests in start-ups. Tomas Baaden, one of the victims of Tristan, was the president of Penture's Japan branch. Searching about Penture on the internet requires a **Library Use** or **Computer Use** roll and reveals that it particularly focuses on supporting tech-based ventures, partnering with universities, etc., and that it recently invested in an AI-music project called 'Partita.' The company's headquarters is in an office building directly connected to Shinjuku Station. Entrance to the office requires a company ID and for security reasons it's difficult to speak with any employees without an appointment.

If the investigators visit Penture's office before 8 PM they won't see any employees enter or exit the building, and at the entrance they find a security guard. The security guard can tell the investigators 'there are employees that work late every night that you might be able to catch and talk to on her way home.' If the investigators visit Penture between 8 PM and the last train (12:30 AM), they can find and talk to the employee in charge of claims, Kyouko Shachikuda (P. 15), on her way home.

Shachikuda tells the investigators that Penture is flooded with complaints over its involvement in HMF and the development of Partita. She has been handling complaints constantly over the past few days, finishing work late every night. With a successful **Persuasion** roll (**Fast Talk** or **Charm** aren't likely to be much use on Shachikuda) she shares that the complaints are coming from people claiming

### HANDOUT 2 - HMF SCHEDULE

9:00	Chala staff meeting
9:30	Equipment unloading (all data has been prepared the day before)
10:30	Set up
13:00	Opening ceremony (surprise event, internet streaming)



to be members of an organisation called the Church of Serialism.

If the investigators mention Partita or AI, Shachikuda can share the contact information of an associate professor at Yugoshi University's Artificial Intelligence Research Laboratory, Jun Eai (p. 16). Shachikuda met Eai in university, where Eai was an alumni member of her university club, and they still meet at alumni meetings.

## YUGOSHI UNIVERSITY

Yugoshi is a massive university with multiple campuses spread throughout Tokyo. The Artificial Intelligence Research Laboratory is in a campus located near Jinbocho Station in the Bunkyo Ward.

The investigators can speak with assistants and students in the Artificial Intelligence Research Laboratory who worked under Professor Sakurako Akasawa when she led the Partita development project, before her death after listening to Tristan. Investigators searching the internet about the Artificial Intelligence Research Laboratory with **Library Use** or **Computer Use** can find news from about half a year ago regarding the lab's development of the AI-composer project Partita. Using Deep Learning (a powerful machine learning system that uses multiple layers of nodes, made up of basic mathematical units, to imitate the structure of a neural circuit), Partita is a system that autonomously seeks out the answer to 'What is good music?' If the investigators received Associate Professor Eai's (P. 16) contact details from Penture's Shachikuda, they can easily set up an appointment. Otherwise, they will need to ask a student where the lab is located.

If the investigators tell Eai or the students about the dangers of Partita or Tristan, while sceptical, they promise to run a risk verification and inform the investigators of the results, but they explain that it will take more than three days to complete. While they won't finish in time for HMF, in the end they discover the dangers of Partita and Tristan and delete any data saved in the laboratory. Unfortunately, the data taken out of the laboratory for HMF cannot be remotely deleted, leaving the investigators to deal with. If the investigators ask Eai or the students to help destroy the data during HMF, they will refuse as a memorial service for Professor Akasawa is being held separately on the same day. With a successful **Interpersonal** skill roll, Eai can promise to provide assistance over the phone if needed.

Should the investigators ask to see information or specifications for Partita or Tristan, another successful **Interpersonal** roll is required independent of the roll required to gain Eai's phone support during HMF. If the investigators are allowed to see the information or specifications, an **Electronics** or **Computer Use** roll allows them to understand some information useful for deleting the Tristan data during HMF. Attempting this roll though, whether succeeding or failing, requires two hours to read through the documents. Also, the lab members will not allow the documents to be taken out of the lab.

Furthermore, the investigators can check Professor Akasawa's (see Victim A's Home section, P. 12) computer with a **Computer Use** roll to find her emails (Handout 3 - Email from Akasawa). Players could also be allowed

to find the handout if they verbally mention searching for emails.

If asked about where Tristan was taken to outside the lab, Eai explains, 'Around the beginning of October, Professor Akasawa had a meeting with some non-university people working on HMF and gave the attendees USB sticks. When I asked her about it, she said, 'The USB sticks had audio files composed by Partita around the end of September.' I begged her to let me listen to it, but she told me she couldn't even tell anyone what kind of music it was until publicly revealing it at HMF, much less let me hear it.'

Professor Akasawa's meeting was regarding playing Tristan at HMF. The other attendees were Saya Kanakura, Tomas Baaden, Takuto Chikura, and Victim A.

Additionally, when the subject of HMF comes up when talking with Eai, he says that Kyouko Shachikuda (P. 15) at Penture GmbH has been working overtime everyday handling claims related to HMF, and if the investigators want to talk to her, they can probably catch her if they wait near Penture's office late at night.

## MESSIAEN RECORD CO., LTD.

Messiaen Record Co., Ltd. is a company that manufactures and sells audio equipment, as well as dispatches sound staff for concerts and events. If searching around on the internet, the investigators can make **Library Use** or **Computer Use** rolls that the company's principal shareholder is a religious organisation called the Church of Serialism.

Messiaen Record's head office is located near Ueno Park, and while it is a small company, non-employees will be stopped at reception and not allowed to enter the office. If the investigators wait near the entrance or make an appointment, one of Takuto Chikura's colleagues, Ren Otoishi (p. 16), will come out to speak with them. Chikura was working on HMF as a sound technician, and Otoishi is now serving as Chikura's replacement. Otoishi also witnessed Chikura's death and has a suspicion that Chikura was listening to some sort of dangerous music during the incident. As long as the investigators don't threaten Otoishi or cause a scene at Messiaen Record, he will assist the investigators' plans during HMF, within reason. However, Otoishi cannot delete Tristan's data now as it was sent to Chala Inc. before Chikura's death.

While Messiaen Record's principal shareholder is the Church of Serialism, the company's business has no connection to the church's activities, and the employees don't really know or have opinions about the shareholders' beliefs. Asking the employees more, therefore, won't reveal any useful information.

## OTHER LOCATIONS

In addition to the preceding places, the following may be locations the investigators might try to explore.

## VICTIM A'S WORKPLACE

If Victim A was a musician, the investigators may try to ask around their office or production company. Outside of special circumstances, however, the office or production company will be cautious and not want to release any information. If one of the investigators is connected to



the police or was a close acquaintance of Victim A, they could be told that Victim A's social media is being flooded with comments caused by harassment from a religious group (Church of Serialism).

### **VICTIM A'S HOME**

If any of the investigators were close friends with Victim A, they may be able to search Victim A's home. The investigators would need to explain their reasons and pass a **Persuasion** or **Fast Talk** roll to convince a landlord or family member to let them search Victim A's home. If they search Victim A's computer, they can find the October 1st email from Professor Akasawa (Handout 3 - Email from Akasawa)

The investigators can see that, besides Victim A, this email was also sent to Chala Inc.'s HMF representative (Kanakura), a manager at Penture GmbH - a major investor in HMF and Partita's development (Baaden), and a sound technician for HMF (Chikura).

In addition, a USB stick containing the audio files for Tristan given to Victim A by Kanakura can be found here.

### **POLICE STATION**

Police officers will not provide information about the case to investigators. However, if an investigator is a police officer or in a legal profession, with a successful **Persuade** roll, the police officer tells the investigator that a religious organisation named the 'Church of Serialism' may be involved in the threats against HMF. Because police officers are obliged to maintain confidentiality, **Fast Talk** and **Charm** skills are useless.

### **HMF VENUE**

Preparation and set-up for HMF does not begin until the day of the event. However, since the event venue is a public space and open to everyone, investigators can make preparations at the venue in advance.

## **CHURCH OF SERIALISM EXPOSED**

when the investigators have gathered an appropriate amount of information, the Keeper can have the investigators come across the news headline 'Multiple suspects arrested for alleged threats made against HMF.' Searching for more information does not require a roll, and the investigators can find that the arrested suspects were worshippers from the religious organisation 'The Church of Serialism,' the police claim involvement of the overall church itself, and that the police plan to soon conduct searches of church

facilities.

If the investigators search for information on the Church of Serialism, with a Library Use or Computer Use roll, they can learn that the Church of Serialism worships the 'god of music', though there is not any information on what the god of music actually is (Keeper Note: The church actually worships Tru'nembra). Additionally, there is no evidence of the Church of Serialism being involved in any similar incidents before, and seems to have been a relatively moderate organisation. Furthermore, they learn the Church of Serialism invests in various music-related businesses (live houses, concert halls, audio/sound-related companies, etc.) and is a majority stakeholder in a number of companies. Even if the investigators fail their Library Use or Computer Use rolls, they can find that the Church's main temple is located in Jiyugaoka in Meguro-Ku Ward.

## **INSIDE THE CHURCH OF SERIALISM**

The investigators can enter the worship hall of the church's main temple, but there are no people present due to the recent scandal. Also, there is an unlocked door to an office at the rear of the worship hall.

### **WORSHIP HALL**

Searching around the worship hall, the investigators can find what looks like scripture used by the worshippers. Reviewing the scripture, it seems like the latter part had been rewritten recently. This section claims the 'god of music' will soon descend to banish the 'devil's music.' With an **INT** roll, an investigator might think that it seems like the worshippers had plans to neutralise the 'devil's music' (Tristan) in some way.

Frighteningly complex sheet music is included at the end of the scriptures. With an **Art/Craft (Music)** or similar roll, an investigator can hear the melody floating in their head. The music is mysterious, as if echoing from the edge of the cosmos, and the investigator can sense a horrifying power within it, capable of rupturing humanity's sense of rule and order in the universe. They can't help but imagine what misfortune would befall them should this music actually be played. Any unfortunate investigator that reads and understands this awesome and terrifying music takes a 1/1D10 **SAN** loss. Investigators can take the scripture with them, so this **Art/Craft (Music)** roll can be retried as often as time allows.

If an investigator succeeds **Cthulhu Mythos** roll, they realise the score in the scripture is a song of Tru'nembra itself, and they automatically lose 1/1D10 **Sanity** Points

### **HANDOUT 3 - EMAIL FROM AKASAWA**

Subject: [Priority] Tristan Password

Contents:

I forgot to tell all of you the password for the USB stick I handed out today.

The password is 'f4h3dis4gis'.

Also, as discussed during the meeting, 'Tristan' will have its world-first reveal at the HMF opening event.

Until then, please be careful that no one outside of our group listens to it.

Best regards,

Akasawa



(Tru'nembra's full **SAN** loss is suppressed as they are not actually physically encountering the god).

### CHURCH OFFICE

If the players don't think to look in the office, the Keeper could inform them the police are likely to raid the temple soon and confiscate any materials that may have been of use to the investigators.

Inside the office, the investigators notice a schedule for the church's staff and important worshippers. Most of these worshippers are scheduled to meet at a commercial facility in Tokyo tomorrow at 1 pm (the HMF venue), and with a successful **Know** or **Art/Craft (Music)** roll, the investigators realise that these worshippers are all well-known musicians. If any of the investigators succeeded the **INT** roll in the worship hall, they realise that the Church of Serialism was planning to have its highly-skilled musicians infiltrate HMF and play the 'powerful music' contained in the scriptures at the same time as Tristan's revealment to counter and neutralise it (if no investigators succeeded the **INT** roll in the worship hall, any investigator that read the scriptures can retry the **INT** roll with a bonus die).

Finally, if any investigators passed a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll in the worship hall, they can realise that the Church of Serialism plans to eliminate Tristan by summoning Tru'nembra itself.

## HILLS MUSIC FESTA

### HMF VENUE

HMF takes place in Roppongi at the Art Hills complex, which contains facilities like high-class hotels and concert halls where various performances and exhibitions will be held indoors and outdoors.

Audience members require tickets to enter HMF, but the opening event where Tristan will be showcased takes place on a stage in front of the Hotel Grand Continental, allowing many people like regular visitors without tickets and people staying at the hotel to see the event.

### SCHOENBERG HALL

Schoenberg Hall is a concert hall in the Art Hills complex where concerts of a wide variety of musical genres, from classical to jazz and rock, are held. The facility has a main hall for large concerts and a recital hall for smaller concerts. Both halls are used for various concerts and events throughout HMF. The Keeper is free to decide the specifics of these events.

Additionally, numerous small shops and stores are attached to Schoenberg Hall, such as cafes and restaurants, a convenience store, a drug store, a bookstore, a flower shop, etc.

### HOTEL GRAND CONTINENTAL

The Hotel Grand Continental is a 37-floor skyscraper. The first floor lobby and lounge, the second floor restaurant, and the top floor bar are open to anyone. The front plaza of the Hotel Grand Continental is visible from every room, but not the stage itself. Should the investigators decide

to stay at the hotel, it costs 30,000 - 70,000 yen a night per person.

### ENTERING THE STAFF AREA

The computer and equipment used for Tristan's showcase are set up in the staff area. Only organisers from Chala and sound technicians from Messiaen Record are allowed entrance to the staff area. Stopping the reveal of Tristan would require tampering with the equipment, necessitating a **Disguise** or **Stealth** roll for the investigators to enter the staff area unnoticed. On a failure, unless a **Group Luck** roll is passed, nearby staff will kick the investigators out of the staff area. Should the investigators have gained the assistance of Charashima from Chala or Otoishi from Messiaen Record, they can gain access to the staff area without a roll using their HMF staff ID.

### HMF OPENING

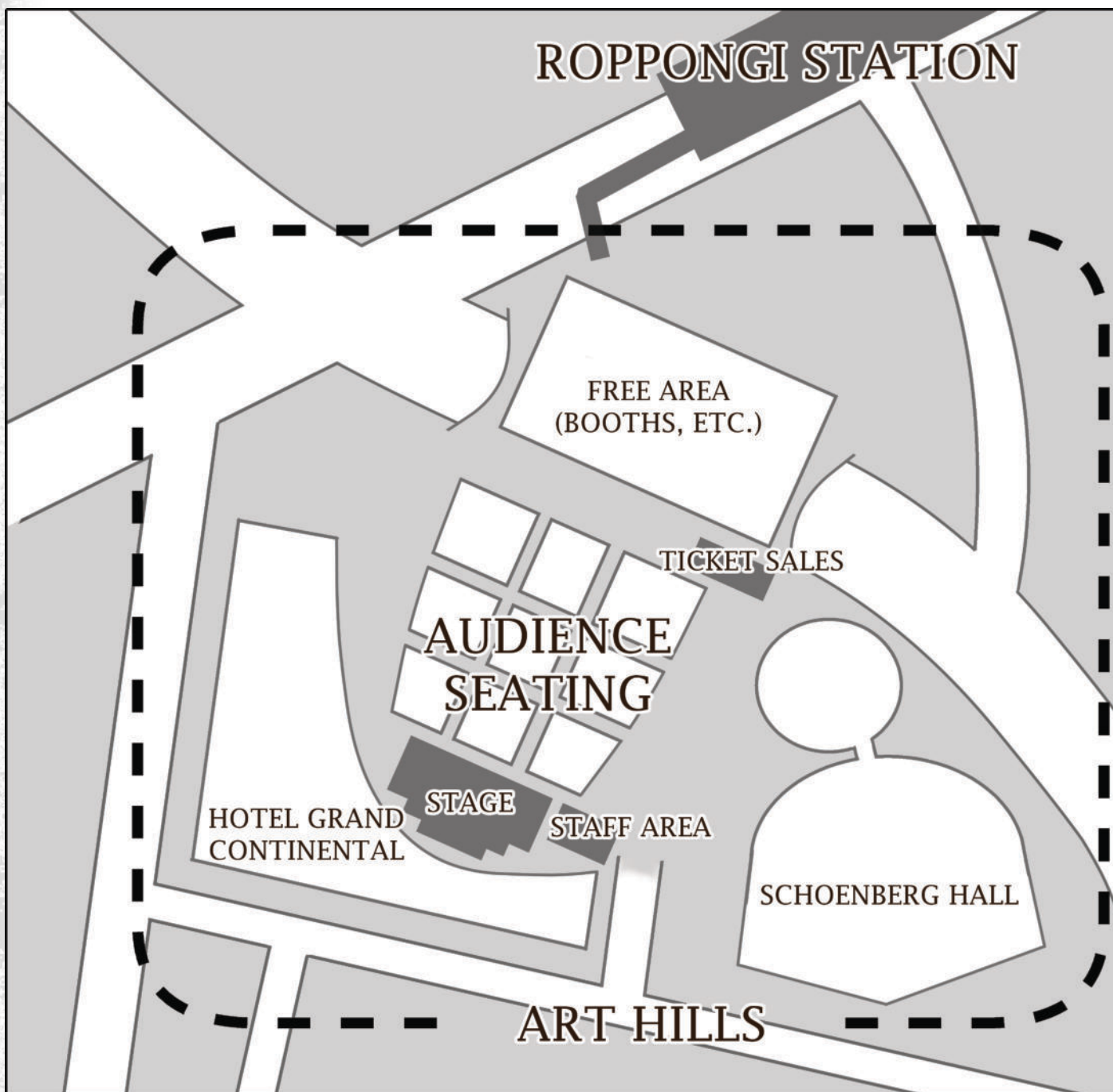
People begin taking their seats around 12:30 PM, and almost all seats are taken just before HMF kicks off. Others stand around the seating area to watch, and passersby on nearby sidewalks stop to see what's about to start. Media outlets have also turned out to cover the showcasing of Tristan in the opening event.

### STOPPING TRISTAN'S REVEAL

The players can think of various ways to try stopping the Tristan showcase, but the most reasonable method is to secretly use the equipment brought in by Chala and delete the Tristan data. An **Electronics** or **Computer Use** roll is required to delete the Tristan Data. If an investigator understood the specifications or data from Yugoshi University, they can receive a bonus die for their roll. They could also receive the bonus die if Associate Professor Eai from the Yugoshi Artificial Intelligence Research Laboratory helps over the phone. Depending on the circumstances, the Keeper could modify the roll as necessary. Whether a success or failure, this roll always requires one hour to attempt. Up until 30 minutes before the event begins this roll can be attempted multiple times, but only one investigator can make an attempt at a time. Tristan is also the centrepiece of the opening event, so some other music or performance would be needed to keep the event moving smoothly. Someone from Messiaen Record, such as Otoishi, could be told in advance so he could prepare something. Or, if the investigators have an applicable **Art/Craft (Music)** skill, they could play something themselves.

Alternatively, the investigators could do as the Church of Serialism intended, performing Tru'nembra's melody during the opening event to neutralise Tristan. Investigators that found the scriptures at the main temple and understood the score can perform it. As the investigator begins to play, another, separate, melody overlaps it, something complex but monotonous. It sounds distant and small at first, but gradually grows louder until it completely overwhelms both the investigator's and Tristan's songs. The sound becomes ear-splitting, unbearably loud, and the windows of nearby buildings begin to shatter. Many of those in the audience find themselves immobile from extreme dizziness, while others bleed from their ears and collapse.





Tru'nembra has descended on the modern metropolis of Tokyo. Investigators caught in this calamity make a **SAN 1/2D10** roll. Furthermore, besides the people at the actual event, viewers of the online stream also hear Tru'nembra's song, and similar events spread out from Tokyo across the world. As Tristan's song is drowned out there are very few victims of it, but a great confusion takes its place.

In the event the investigators do not receive help from any of the people connected to HMF or obtain any useful information from the Church of Serialism, their last resort is likely to be to try destroying the HMF sound equipment. If the investigators do try, nearby staff try to stop them. Even if the investigators succeed in destroying the equipment, many people witness them publicly committing

vandalism. Police naturally try arresting the investigators to carry out appropriate punishment. And even though Tristan's announcement is stopped, the data remains, meaning it could still be revealed in the future.

### **TRU'NEMBRA, ANGEL OF MUSIC**

STR n/a CON n/a SIZ n/a DEX n/a POW: 300

Hit Points: 60

Magic Points: 60

DB: n/a

Build: n/a

Move: speed of sound

### **Combat**

Attacks per round: 1 (sonic wave)



May send forth a Sonic Wave (see above), once per round, but is otherwise unable to physically interact.

Fighting: automatic, based on magic points expended (see above)

### **Armor**

None. However, as Tru'nembra is living sound, it can only be damaged by spells that target INT or POW, and devices that affect sound waves.

**Sonic Wave:** sends forth sound powerful enough to damage structures and harm the living, causing varying damage based on the number of magic points invested (each magic point equates to a die roll, so 4 magic points deliver 1D4 damage, 6 points equals 1D6 damage, and 10 points being 1D10 damage). The wave affects all living things within 100 yards/metres; glass breaks and bricks may crack, while blood vessels rupture, and so on. At a cost of 100 magic points, Tru'nembra may emit a devastating sonic blast strong enough to inflict 1D100 damage to living things, and able to twist steel, crumble foundations, and topple some buildings (only magical means may protect listeners); for every 100 magic points invested increase the damage by +1D100.

### **TRISTAN'S REVEALING**

If the investigators are unable to stop it, Tristan spreads terror through the HMF grounds at Art Hills. One by one, people in the crowd begin stabbing their faces and necks, blood spouting out from them one after the other like fountains. Through the screams, ripping flesh, bodies toppling to the ground, and fleeing footsteps, Tristan's melody keeps loudly ringing out. Eventually only the lonely crooning of Tristan remains in Art Hills, leaving the plaza in front of the Grand Continental looking like an abstract art piece painted with blood.

Of course, the victims are not restricted to only those at Art Hills. This bizarre scene of art created at the HMF venue continues to be broadcasted via the internet. Some of the viewers may be lucky enough to be stopped from doing fatal harm to themselves. This is not the case for those unfortunate enough to be watching alone, or for families fully entranced by Tristan, leading to later news reports of series of such deaths.

Others with malicious intent record the video without listening to it to later distribute it globally. It would be difficult to prevent terrorism using music, and soon cities with large gatherings are targeted one after another. Those lucky enough to survive Tristan's horror spend their days in fear of hearing anything.

### **CONCLUSION**

If Tristan is stopped without causing any injury, the investigators gain 1D6 Sanity Points. If the investigators stopped Tristan by performing Tru'nembra's melody, they lose 1D3 Sanity Points due to driving many people, potentially including the investigators themselves, insane.

If the investigators are arrested for destroying equipment or something similar, they will be unable to do further investigating while the appropriate legal procedures are

carried out. During the interrogation, the police are not likely to take the investigators' testimony regarding the dangers of Tristan and Tru'nembra seriously, potentially resulting in the investigators being institutionalised.

Finally, if the investigators failed to stop Tristan, then they, as well as the attendees and staff at HMF and all those who witnessed the internet broadcast, are unlikely to survive.

### **NPC STATS**

#### **CHALA INC. HMF REPRESENTATIVE, KENJI CHARASHIMA, 27**



A tall man who wears silver accessories and casual clothing. He has a flirtatious personality, and is eager to please any female investigator with an **APP** over 70.

He can be convinced to sneak the investigators into the company or to introduce them to other employees with a successful Interpersonal Skill roll, or if the investigator is of the opposite sex, they receive a bonus die to a Charm roll or can attempt an APP roll.

STR 60	CON 65	SIZ 85	DEX 55	INT 75
APP 75	POW 75	EDU 70	SAN 75	HP 15
DB: +1D4		Build:1	Move:7	

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 60%(30 / 12), Damage 1D3 + 1D4

Skills: Charm 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Other Language (English) 45%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 40%

#### **PENTURE GMBH EMPLOYEE, KYOUKO SHACHIKUDA, 24**

A tired-looking, serious woman in a suit with dark bags under her eyes from lack of sleep.

Seeing the investigators as outsiders of the company, she'll complain about her work, but she will answer any questions they ask.

STR 50	CON 30	SIZ 65	DEX 60	INT 60
APP 65	POW 55	EDU 80	SAN 55	HP 10
DB:+0		Build:0	Move:7	



Attacks per round: 1  
Brawl 40%(20 / 8), Damage 1D3

Skills: Library Use 45%, Persuasion 30%, Other Language (English) 25%, Throw 35%, Accounting 30%, Psychology 15%, Credit Rating 15%



**YUGOSHI UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATE  
PROFESSOR, JUN EAL, 47**



A middle aged man of average build with close-cropped hair and dingy clothing. His students affectionately call him by his first name, Jun.

He plays piano as a hobby and has a deep knowledge of music. He's also a so-called otaku, spending his breaks watching streaming anime on the laboratory computer.

He is generally cooperative, and he will be particularly helpful towards anyone that talks with him about his interests.

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 70 DEX 65 INT 85  
APP 45 POW 75 EDU 92 SAN 75 HP 13  
DB:+1D4 Build:1 Move:6

Attacks per round: 1  
Brawl 30%(15 / 6), Damage 1D3 + 1D4

Skills: Computer Use 70%, Library Use 65%, Persuasion 65%, Electrical Repair 55%, Electronics 50%, Other Language (English) 55%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Art/Craft

(Piano) 40%, Talking about anime 40%, Credit Rating 55%

**MESSIAEN RECORD CO. LTD. EMPLOYEE,  
REN OTOISHI, 32**

A muscular man wearing a Messiaen Record event T-shirt who is extremely knowledgeable about Japanese and foreign rock bands.

STR 80 CON 60 SIZ 80 DEX 60 INT 65  
APP 65 POW 55 EDU 80 SAN 55 HP 12  
DB: +0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Attacks per round: 1  
Brawl 30%(15 / 6), Damage 1D3

Skills: Art/Craft (Musical Appreciation) 65%, Art/Craft (Guitar) 45%, Charm 20%, Credit Rating 30%



# SUTRA CHANTING NETWORK

読経ネットワーク

By Lom

## INTRODUCTION

This scenario uses the Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition Keeper Rulebook and is designed for a group of two to four players. The playtime is around three hours not including investigator creation.

The setting is modern day Kyoto, Japan (any year after 2015). The season is fall, but there is no issue with changing this to suit a campaign or other situations as needed.

Ideally, at least one investigator should be related to the priest of the fictitious Shimogamo Shrine in Kyoto.

This scenario features IoT technologies developed up to 2015. The Keeper should at least understand the contents of the 'about IoT technology' box (P. 19).

This scenario features fictitious representations of the real shrines Kifune Shrine, Shimogamo Shrine, Kamigamo Shrine, and Yasaka Shrine. The Keeper could refer to the real shrines when describing scenes.

This scenario is fictional and has no connection past or present to any real people, organisations, etc.

## KEEPER INFORMATION

Gai Sayama works at the Kyoto University-derived tech start-up KIoT Co., Ltd. While on a conference trip to Vermont, his brain was taken over by a Mutant Mi-go, which can fuse with and manipulate other living things.

The Mi-go infecting Gai seeks to summon Azathoth to Kyoto in order to terrorise the denizens and replenish its energy resources. To accomplish this, the Mi-go plans to drain **POW** from Kyoto's masses through the Dread Curse of Azathoth spell (Keeper Rulebook P. 254), pre-prepared by the Mi-go, and collect the extracted **POW** into its soul-sucking device (see 'Mi-go Soul-Sucking Machine' in the 'Mi-go Artefacts' section, P. 20).

However, the Mi-go considers using the spell by itself to be risky and inefficient, and so modified an IoT chip developed by Gai at his company that could be implanted in the human body (human-subdermal IoT chip). When implanted, this chip allows the Mi-go to monitor and even remotely control its human subject, and so by manipulating people to chant the spell to drain **POW** it can quickly achieve its goal. The Mi-go also utilises the IoT chip in a terrible weapon, the 'Mechanised Kifune Shrine' standing by on Mount Kurama.

The investigators must stop the Mi-go's plan and protect Kyoto from Azathoth.

## MAIN NPCS

### GAi SAYAMA



A friend of an investigator and son of the priest of Kifune Shrine on Mount Kurama. He works as a hardware engineer at the Kyoto University-derived tech start-up KIoT Co., Ltd..

After graduating from Kyoto University's Faculty of Engineering, Gai continued his studies through the same university's Graduate School of Engineering, and under Professor Nobuaki Oyama he conducted the research on IoT chip development that would precede his current work. Gai completed his Master's degree with fervent research, and was then recruited by Professor Oyama to work at his company, KIoT.

One month before the start of the scenario, Gai travelled to Vermont to attend a conference at the University of Vermont. After the conference he went to Townshend for sightseeing, and while there found the ruins of a Mi-go ship that had crashed in there in the 17th century. He was then infected by the Mi-go hiding in the forest.

If the Mi-go's plans are disrupted by Gai losing consciousness, dying, or being arrested by the police, the Mi-go bursts from Gai's head and hunts for a new host. For details, see the 'Fungoid Emergence' section (P. 18).

### GAi SAYAMA (27), VICTIM OF THE MI-GO

STR 65	CON 80	SIZ 60	DEX 60	INT 75
APP 80	POW 90	EDU 82	SAN 25	HP 14
DB: +1D4		Build: 1	Move: 8	

Attacks per round: 1



Brawl 30%(15 / 6), Damage 1D3+1D4

Skills: Science (Physics) 50%, Electronics 70%, Electrical Repair 35%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Language (English) 40%, Computer Use 40%, Persuasion 35%, Science (Chemistry) 15%, Science (Geology) 6%, Library Use 50%, Credit Rating 35%

### NOBUAKI OYAMA



A professor in the Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyoto University, and CEO of the company Gai works at, KIoT Co., Ltd., which he founded two years ago.

Professor Oyama's laboratory is primarily focused on research for robotic image recognition and motion controls, as well as IoT technology (Internet of Things, see attached article for reference). The IoT chip, the development of which Gai had been involved with since he was a graduate student, is one of the company's main products.

Soon after Gai returned from his trip, the Mi-go used Gai to implant the human-subdermal IoT chip in Professor Oyama. The Mi-go now monitors and remotely controls him as necessary. For details, see the 'Mi-go Artifacts' and 'Spell Invocation' sections (P.19, P. 20).

### NOBUAKI OYAMA (52), CHIP-IMPLANTED KYOTO UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND KIOT CEO

STR 40 CON 55 SIZ 50 DEX 45 INT 85  
APP 55 POW 75 EDU 98 SAN 52 HP 11  
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 5

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 45%(22 / 9), Damage 1D3

Skills: Science (Physics) 70%, Electronics 80%, Electrical Repair 60%, Mechanical Repair 55%, Language (English) 70%, Computer Use 50%, Persuasion 75%, Science (Chemistry) 30%, Science (Geology) 20%, Library Use 60%, Psychology 45%, Credit Rating 72%

### SHIZU SAYAMA

Shizu is Gai Sayama's Wife and also a child of the priest



of Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto. She is a graduate of Kyoto University's Faculty of Science, and she currently makes a living by translating biology textbooks.

She is a woman of reason who can calmly convey her thoughts clearly even under duress.

Shizu feels uneasy about the changes she sees in Gai and could play the role of informing the explorer of the abnormalities about her brother.

She is also implanted with a subdermal-IoT chip, and when the investigators converse with her the event described in the 'Spell Invocation' section occurs (P. 19).

### SHIZU SAYAMA (26), GAI SAYAMA'S WIFE

STR 40 CON 55 SIZ 50 DEX 60 INT 75  
APP 60 POW 70 EDU 83 SAN 51 HP 11  
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 40%(20 / 8), Damage 1D3

### FUNGOID EMERGENCE

When the continuation of the Mi-Go's plan becomes difficult due to Gai fainting, dying, or being taken into police custody, the Mi-Go emerges from his head. It is about the size of a dove, membranous wings unfurl and several sets of twitching limbs ending in clacking pincers spread out from its pinkish-coloured, crustaceous body. Multitudes of quivering antennae sprout from its convoluted ellipsoid head. Those who see it lose 0/1D6 Sanity points.



Skills: Language (English) 65%, Science (Biology) 50%, Spot Hidden 55%, Charm 40%, History 30%, Computer Use 30%, Persuasion 45%, Science (Chemistry) 25%, Science (Astronomy) 20%, Library Use 60%, Psychology 45%, Credit Rating 30%

### MUTANT MI-GO

A mutated species of the Mi-go survivors in Vermont. Although its body has become smaller and weaker, it has gained the ability to fuse with and manipulate other living things. It modified the IoT chip Gai developed to help it gather **POW** in order to summon Azathoth. For details see 'Mi-go Artifacts' (P. 20). When in combat, it prioritizes its attacks and counter attacks on infection, rather than dodging (See Keeper Rulebook P. 282 'Monsters and Fighting Back' for more information)

### MI-GO, DEFORMED FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH

STR 15 CON 50 SIZ 15 DEX 70 INT 65  
APP n/a POW 65 EDU n/a SAN n/a HP 1  
DB: 0 Build: -2 Move: 7 / Flight 13 MP: 13

Attacks per round: 1

Infection 60% (30 / 12), The Fungi from Yuggoth enters the target's body and takes control of them

Brawl 45% (22 / 9), Damage 1D6

Disintegration Ray 15% (7 / 3), Damage 2D10+2

Dodge 77% (38 / 15)

Armor: None

Spells: Call Azathoth (Keeper Rulebook p.248), Call Yogsothoth (Keeper Rulebook p.249), Cloud Memory (Keeper Rulebook p.250), Dread Curse of Azathoth (p.254), Mindblast (Keeper Rulebook p.260), Evil Eye (Keeper Rulebook p.259)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 SAN to see a Mi-go.

### OPENING

Gai invites the investigators to a festival at Shimogamo Shrine, where an investigator's relative is a priest. This festival is called 'Tsukinamisai,' and is held on the first day of every month, and at Shimogamo Shrine people pray to the enshrined deity, Kamomioyasume Omikami, for the prosperity of the Imperial Household and peace for the nation. There is also a more thorough daily Onikku service (food offering for the gods). While normally anyone can join the festival, this time at Shimogamo Shrine the ceremony is a small-scale event limited to 20-30 people, including staff and relatives, as well as other local shrines and neighbourhood associations.

Gai Sayama (the son of the chief priest of Kifune Shrine) and his wife Shizu also attend the festival. The Shimogamo and Kifune shrines are relatively nearby and have a close relationship. Investigators can know that the shrines cooperate daily, and the Sayamas are assisting and observing

### ABOUT IOT TECHNOLOGY

The 'Internet of Things' (IoT) refers to technology that connects devices conventionally not equipped with communication functions, such as vehicles, appliances, industrial equipment, etc., to networks.

This technology's innovation comes from not requiring any human work to collect and exchange information between 'things,' making it possible to automate tasks that were previously done by humans. For example, smart speakers, a commonly used IoT device, automatically detect a person's voice instructions and send them to other devices such as light switches or robotic vacuum cleaners.

### SPELL INVOCATION

This event triggers when the investigators obtain information that endangers the Mi-go's plan from a person implanted with the 'human subdermal IoT chip.' To ensure the session runs smoothly, this should occur after the NPC has given a useful amount of information.

Just before a chip-implanted person is controlled, with a successful **Psychology** or **INT** roll an investigator notices they have an unnaturally drawn expression.

The controlled person becomes expressionless, and as their eyes roll and their mouth foams they begin chanting the Mi-go prepared Dread Curse of Azathoth spell. Unless the chip-implanted person can be escaped from or neutralised, anyone nearby must make an opposed **POW** roll, and on a failure lose 3D6 **POW**. After casting the spell for as many combat rounds as the Keeper desires, the controlled person generally falls unconscious and collapses on the spot.



## MI-GO ARTIFACTS

### MI-GO MINIATURE COMPUTER

A miniature computer for Mi-go use, measuring 10 cm long by 2 cm thick, made from a silvery-white metal, non-existent on Earth and with no buttons or display. Accessing the computer requires either a Mi-go or a Mi-go controlled human to touch the flat surface of the device. The computer has 10 HP and 2 points of armour. If an investigator attempts to use the computer, roll 1D4 on the below event table.

1. If the Kifune Shrine Main Hall is not under the investigators' control, it attacks a target at random with its chainsaw.
2. The 'spell invocation' event triggers in the closest person to the computer embedded with a 'human subdermal IoT chip.'
3. The computer suffers a terminal crash and explodes. Anyone within 1 metre of the explosion loses 1D4 HP from the blast and shrapnel.
4. Some **POW** from the Mi-Go spirit draining device is released. Whoever is closest to the Spirit Draining Device gains 1D6 **POW**. Shortly afterwards the Mi-Go spirit draining device breaks down.

### MI-GO SPIRIT DRAINING DEVICE

A spherical crystal-like object located deep in Mount Kurama's woods, placed on a hexagonal prism-shaped pedestal measuring 1.5 m in width and 1 m in height. This is where the **POW** absorbed by the Mi-go's 'Dread Curse of Azathoth' spell gathered, and after the festival event at Shimogamo Shrine it will have accumulated 78 **POW**.

This mysterious device has 10 HP and 2 points of armour.

### HUMAN-SUBDERMAL IOT CHIP

A 0.5 cm square chip modified by the Mi-Go based on KIoT's IoT chip with GPS. The ultra-precise electronic substrate, covered by a soft case similar to silicone rubber, has a connector that connects to the nerves of a living organism. This connector is designed to be connected to the back of the head, but cannot be implanted by human technology, although it can be removed.

A successful **Electrical Repair** or **Electronics** roll against the chip reveals that it has the capability to transmit and receive across long distances using various types of radio waves, such as those used by Wi-Fi or satellite communications. Furthermore, if using equipment at KIoT or the Oyama Laboratory and with a successful **Electronics** roll, the investigators release the chip's performance compared to its size is unimaginable with current technology, causing a 0/1D3 **SAN** loss. Additionally, if KIoT's security specialist, Yasukawa, is involved in the analysis, he can point out the later described security vulnerabilities in the chip.

This chip possesses 2 main functions. The first is the ability to send information from the implanted human's sensory organs to the Mi-Go miniature computer. The Mi-Go miniature computer is small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, and is held by Gai throughout the scenario.

The second function is the ability to remotely control implanted humans. As further described below, this can be done manually through the Mi-Go miniature computer, or automated through preset operating conditions and outputs. In most cases, the implanted person is set to cast the Mi-Go-prepared Dread Curse of Azathoth spell on anyone attempting to uncover the Mi-Go's secret.

Most victims do not notice the chip, as after the implantation surgery a Cloud Memory spell (Keeper Rulebook P. 250) is cast over them. However, by touching the back of the neck they can notice a square object implanted under the skin.

The chip has two weak points. The first is a weakness to radio wave shielding. As the chip's long distance transmission capabilities use longwave radio bands directed at satellites, simply covering the chip in something metallic such as tin foil will shield it, rendering the Mi-Go unable to control it due to a poor signal. Should the investigators be unable to think of a way to neutralise the chip, with an **Electrical Repair**, **Electronics**, or **Hard KNOW** roll, they could think of this possibility.

The second weakness is a security vulnerability. As the chip is based on KIoT's IoT chip, a security hole in the original chip was also carried over. If the KIoT security specialist sees this chip, he realises it is extremely similar to the chip developed by Gai Sayama. Furthermore, if the KIoT security specialist, Yasukawa, analyses the chip, he finds that it has the same security hole as the chip developed by Sayama. The investigators are likely to exploit this vulnerability.



the monthly festivals of Shimogamo Shrine. The investigator related to the Shimogamo priest knows Gai and Shizu Sayama have visited Shimogamo Shrine a few times beforehand to confirm the ceremony's procedure.

An investigator close to Gai Sayama knows that he works as a hardware engineer at the Kyoto University-born IT start-up KIoT Co., Ltd.

If there is time in the session, the Keeper could allow sightseeing around Kyoto before the festival. Following are some examples of suitable sightseeing locations.

## KYOTO SIGHTSEEING

### JR KYOTO STATION AND KYOTO TOWER

Inside the Kyoto Station building is a 30m high, 171 step grand staircase, a symbol of the station, and regularly the

stage for music festivals and staircase climbing competitions. Kyoto Tower is immediately visible after exiting the central ticket gate. The tower's observation floor is 100m high, and if the investigators go up to it, they can overlook the whole of Kyoto city

### ARASHIYAMA

Exiting Arashiyama Station, one can see the bright autumn coloured leaves lining the banks of Katsura-gawa River. In the spring one can enjoy cherry blossoms in full bloom here as well. In general, the area is crowded with tourists year round. There are tourist attractions such as the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, Tenryu-ji Temple, Sogenchi Garden, and autumn leaves illumination at Daikaku-ji Temple.





The Arashiyama Bamboo Grove is located in Sagano. There is a paved road winds through tens-of-thousands of bamboo stocks. One can also ride rickshaws through the grove.

As one of 'Historical Monuments of Ancient Kyoto,' Tenryu-ji Temple is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sogenchi Garden is a botanical garden near Sogenchi-pond where one can feel the contrast between the white sands and autumn leaves, as well as the elegance of the temple.

### **KIYOMIZU-DERA TEMPLE**

Kiyomizu-dera Temple is an ancient and noble temple with a beautiful view. If travelling by train from JR Kyoto Station it takes about 10 minutes to the nearest station, Keihan Railway Kiyomizu-Gojo Station, and it also takes about 10 minutes if going by bus from the station to the nearest bus stop, Kiyomizudo. Walking from either to Kizomizu-dera Temple takes another 10 minute walk. The street to the temple is lined with souvenir shops, and on holidays the area is packed with Japanese and foreign tourists and students on school trips.

The main hall, a national treasure, hangs over a cliff. Many other buildings are also considered important cultural properties.

### **BYODOIN TEMPLE**

Byodoin Temple is a temple in Uji, Kyoto. It's Heian period (11th century) architecture, Buddhist statues, paintings, and gardens have been preserved to this day, and is registered as a World Heritage Site as one of the 'cultural properties of ancient Kyoto,' and even among those it stands out by having its famous Phoenix Hall (Byodo-in Hoo-do) featured on the 10 Yen coin.

### **ROKUON-JI TEMPLE**

Rokuon-ji is also famously called Kinkaku-ji, or the 'Golden Pavilion,' and was founded by the third shogun of the Muromachi Shogunate, Yoshimitsu Ashikaga. It gets its famous nickname due to its inside and outside being coated with gold leafing. It is especially beautiful seeing its reflection mirrored in Kyoko-chi, the Mirror Pond.

### **SHIJO KAWARAMACHI**

Shijo Kawaramachi is Kyoto's main commercial area. It houses many businesses such as department stores, drug stores, bookstores, movie theatres, apparel stores, and restaurants. The Kamogawa River flows nearby, and its banks are one of Kyoto's seasonal attractions.

### **FESTIVAL AT SHIMOGAMO SHRINE**

A festival takes place at Shimogamo Shrine, where a relative of an investigator serves as a priest. This festival is called Tsukinamisai, and is held every month to pray for the peace of the country. The investigators are called to the main hall, crowded with 20 to 30 relatives and friends, to begin preparations.

Through the solemn atmosphere the priest chants Norito (Shinto prayer) and thanks to the gods and blessings for the peace of the nation, while shrine maidens dance to the Norito.

As the festival draws to a close though, the tone of the priest's Norito changes. Compared to before, his chant is harder to understand, sounding more like a sutra heard at a Buddhist temple than any Norito at a Shinto shrine. Investigators with a connection to temples or shrines can make an **INT** roll, **Language (Sanskrit)**, **Language (Japanese)**, or other appropriate rolls to tell there are odd syllables in the chant not found in Shinto prayers making it sound like a sutra, which are in a non-Japanese language. Investigators who fail their rolls can still intuitively sense something is eerily wrong with the chant.

All investigators must then make an opposed **POW** roll against the priest's **POW** 70. A sudden pain wracks investigators failing the roll, as well as most of the other festival attendees, leaving a feeling as if their souls were being pulled out of their bodies, causing them to lose 3D6 **POW** and then collapse (as described later, the lost **POW** is returned to its owner by destroying the Mi-Go Spirit Draining Device). Investigators succeeding the opposed **POW** roll withstand the assault and maintain consciousness.

Additionally, particles of light rise from investigators that failed the **POW** roll, as well as the other attendees, and fly away from the shrine in the direction of Mount Kurama. It may be better to let the players infer where the light particles are heading, with the Keeper referencing the map and indicating only the direction (in this case, to the north away from Shimogamo Shrine).

Whether or not the investigators try to stop the priest's chanting, before losing consciousness he murmurs, "the day of the Demon King's arrival draws near..." "With the dawn of Townshend, comes the prosperity and dominion of our kind..." "Bring your spirits unto me..." Witnessing this causes a 0/1D4 **SAN** roll. Additionally, any investigator close to the priest that succeeds a **Spot Hidden** roll notices a mark on the back of the priest's neck that looks like it was cut open then sutured shut.

If the investigators call the police or an ambulance, they arrive within five minutes. If none of the investigators make the call, other attendees that maintain consciousness soon make the call for help.

### **HOSPITAL**

Attendees and investigators that collapsed due to the strange chant are taken to a nearby hospital. The symptoms are fortunately temporary, and soon the victims, including the investigators, regain their faculties. They feel a sense of loss, however, as if some of their inner energy or vitality had been drained away. An x-ray examination of the priest, a relative of an investigator, discovers a white foreign object in the back of his neck. A doctor can remove it in between 30 minutes and an hour.

When the investigators are shown the object, they see it looks like a computer chip encased in a silicon-rubber-like material (Keeper note: this is a Mi-Go Human-Subdermal IoT chip - see the Mi-Go Artefacts section for more details).

### **OTHER INFORMATION FOUND IN THE HOSPITAL**

The investigators can try to get in contact with Gai Sayama and Shizuka, but if they try to visit immediately after waking up, the couple are still sleeping.



Outside of any special circumstances, Gai is likely to leave the hospital and head to Mount Kurama while the investigators are at KIoT investigating the chip and developing software. Around that time, Shizuka contacts the investigators, apologising for not letting them know right away when Gai had left the hospital right away, and then explaining about Gai's recent odd behaviour.

- While on a trip to Townshend, Vermont, Gai came back from a walk displaying odd changes in behaviour. Specifically, he would physically handle things rougher and cut off contact with people.
- Lately, on his way home Gai would often stop by Kifune Shrine. She wondered if something was happening at the shrine, but she wasn't aware of any particular events going on.

Shizuka is implanted with a Human-Subdermal IoT Chip. After talking with the investigators, the 'spell invocation' event occurs, and Shizuka falls unconscious again.

## POLICE

Police likely want to question the investigators after they recover, also giving the investigators a chance to hear about the wider context. The police explain that two similar incidents occurred in recent weeks. The first happened at a Kyoto University campus, and the second at a home electronics store in Shijo Kawaramachi.

- The first similar incident occurred during a small lecture at Kyoto University Katsura Campus. According to the student's testimony, the lecturing professor suddenly started making strange noises, and then most of the students present fainted. Furthermore, nearby eyewitnesses said they saw particles of white light in the sky over the area (Keeper note: the professor was Gai's mentor and current boss, Oyama. The light particles are also said to have headed north east).
- The occurrence at the Shijo Kawaramachi home electronics store was similar. The same phenomenon that occurred at the Kyoto University Katsura Campus repeated here during a lottery event.

## INVESTIGATION

### KYOTO UNIVERSITY KATSURA CAMPUS

Katsura Campus is one of Kyoto University's numerous campuses and is mainly dedicated to the faculty of engineering. If desired, the Keeper could copy the campus map from the Kyoto University website. Getting from JR Kyoto Station to the campus takes 40 minutes by bus, and about 20 minutes by taxi.

The Intelligent Mechanics Laboratory (Oyama Laboratory), located inside the Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering, is in the northeast section of Building C3's third floor.

### DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, INTELLIGENT MECHANICS LABORATORY (OYAMA LABORATORY)

The laboratory is made up of eight rooms, and is dedicated to designing machines making use of IoT and AI. Various machines and computers pack the lab rooms, meeting rooms, break rooms, and students' desks. When the investigators arrive, they see students controlling robotic arms or small radio-controlled car-like machines using their smartphones.

An associate professor, an assistant professor, four project researchers, a secretary, and 10 graduate and undergraduate students are staffed in the laboratory. In most cases, Toru Saikouji, a first year graduate student, handles visitors. As part of his IoT-focused research project, and as a hobby, he works on a smartphone-controlled Buddha statue on wheels.

### TORU SAIKOUJI (23), GRADUATE STUDENT DREAMING OF AN IOT-ENABLED MOBILE BUDDHIST STATUE

STR 75 CON 40 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 65  
APP 35 POW 60 EDU 80 SAN 60 HP 10  
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 50%(25 / 10), Damage 1D3+1D4

Skills: Mechanical Repair 75%, Electronics 40%, Operate Heavy Machinery 40%, Computer Use 40%, Credit Rating 15%

Saikouji can tell the investigators, "I was assisting with the lecture when the incident happened. Professor Oyama suddenly started chanting something like a sutra. I'm from a temple family, so I could tell it wasn't a real sutra, not like one I'd ever heard."

He can also tell the investigators Oyama spends most of his work hours at the KIoT Co. Ltd. office near the campus.

If the investigators mention Gai Sayama, he says "Oh, Sayama! That brings back memories." He explains that Gai was a graduate student when Saikouji was an undergraduate, and Gai would give him career advice.

### SHIJO KAWARAMACHI, HOME ELECTRONICS STORE

When the investigators visit the Shijo Kawaramachi Home Electronics Store, a store clerk, Inori Akamura, greets them.

Akamura is also a fourth year undergraduate student in the Oyama laboratory, and he works at the home electronics store part time. He is implanted with a Human-subdermal IoT Chip. The incident at the store was caused by the Mi-Go through Akamura's chip. About five minutes after the investigators start asking questions, or once they receive an appropriate amount of information, the 'spell invocation' event occurs.

Akamura can explain the following. "I was here during a lottery event and explaining the system to a customer when it suddenly happened. Just like that I lost consciousness. It was kinda like something took over my head for a bit.



My manager said later that I'd been saying something completely different than I'd been trying to say. Something like a sutra, he said."

### **INORI AKAMURA (22), CHIP-IMPLANTED UNLUCKY UNIVERSITY STUDENT**

STR 50 CON 45 SIZ 65 DEX 85 INT 65  
APP 30 POW 50 EDU 73 SAN 41 HP 11  
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 25%(12 / 5), Damage 1D3

Skills: Drive Auto 60%, Pilot (RC Airplane) 55%, Electrical Repair 45%, Science (Physics) 35%, Credit Rating 15%

### **KIOT CO., LTD.**

KIoT is a start-up tech company about a 10 minute walk from the gate of Kyoto University Katsura Campus. The company is located on the fifth floor of an office building and staffs 10 employees. When he isn't at lectures, on business trips, or having meetings, President Oyama spends most of his time at this office rather than at his university research lab.

### **OFFICE**

The small office is made up of two 16 square metre workrooms, one 13 square metre reception room, a bathroom, and a simple kitchenette. Computers, whiteboards, large display screens, and cameras for teleconferencing fill one of the workrooms, while tools and equipment for working with hardware outfit the other workroom. The reception room is the cleanest, and decorated with houseplants, electric shutters, and a drone for demonstrations.

### **MEETING OYAMA**

If the investigators succeed a **Fast Talk**, **Charm**, or **Persuade** roll, or mention they are friends of Gai Sayama, Oyama's secretary assists them. The secretary takes the investigators to the reception room and soon after Oyama enters the room. He provides a business card and politely introduces himself then asks what he can help them with.

If the investigators ask him about his incident at the university, Oyama explains he suddenly lost consciousness

mid-lecture, and when he came to the students were in a drooling slumber.

If the investigators ask what KIoT does, Oyama demonstrates by using his smartphone to operate the room's air conditioner and shutters and the drone.

Even if the investigators don't ask, Oyama brings up Gai Sayama. He praises Gai as an excellent employee, and says Gai always worked overtime on his own accord, this past month he's been working longer and longer hours and much more efficiently. A month ago Gai went to a seminar overseas at the University of Vermont, and Oyama thinks he must have gotten a burst of motivation while there to cause such a change over such a short period of time.

Additionally, if the investigators ask for technical assistance, Oyama can recommend KIoT personnel.

Oyama is also implanted with a Mi-Go Human-Subdermal IoT Chip, and the 'spell invocation' event will occur during or after the conversation.

### **WORKROOMS**

Employees are hard at work in these rooms. If asked about what they are working on, they explain they recently found a security flaw in the IoT chip's KIoT sells, and their head of product security, Yasukawa, is focused on patching it. As the project is nearing its final stages and the only remaining tasks are final detail checks, it shouldn't be too difficult for the investigators to recruit their assistance.

If Head of Security Yasukawa analyses a Human-Subdermal IoT Chip, he explains the chip has the same security weakness as the KIoT-made IoT chip.

### **YASUSHI YASUKAWA (42), ENGINEER (HEAD OF PRODUCT SECURITY)**

Yasukawa is a specialist in charge of security measures for all of KIoT's products. He is knowledgeable of the security hole in the IoT chip he developed together with Gai. At the start of the scenario he is repairing the recently-discovered security flaw in the KIoT IoT chip. He can be a powerful ally as he can develop software to access the Mi-Go IoT chips.

STR 45 CON 75 SIZ 75 DEX 55 INT 80  
APP 40 POW 65 EDU 76 SAN 65 HP 15  
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 5

### **KIOT-MADE IOT CHIP**

The IoT chip, developed by Gai, is about 2 cm square. Simply embedding this chip in a product enables IoT implementation in home appliances, industrial equipment, etc. Currently, it is mainly sold to companies.

Using this chip, KIoT is not only remotely monitoring industrial equipment and electricity/gas metres from smartphones, but has also started remote control of transportation drones. Additionally, three months ago, the company completed the development of an IoT chip that integrates GPS in order to smoothly coordinate the acquisition of GPS location information with remote control. This chip, which allows for relatively accurate remote control, has been modified and misused by Mi-go. For details, please refer to the 'Human-Subdermal IoT Chip' in the 'Mi-go Artefacts' section.



Attacks per round: 1  
Brawl 30%(15 / 6), Damage 1D3

Skills: Electronics 35%, Electrical Repair 45%, Mechanical Repair 65%, Computer Use 90%, Science (Mathematics) 50%, Language (English) 45%, Persuasion 25%, Library Use 65%, Psychology 30%, Credit Rating 45%

### **KAIJI KIDA(44), ENGINEER (HEAD OF HARDWARE)**

Kida is a former researcher and knowledgeable of all things hardware. He remembers Gai as a promising graduate student and has appreciated Gai's productive efforts since joining the company. However, Gai's results over the past month have been even more impressive.

STR 55 CON 65 SIZ 70 DEX 50 INT 75  
APP 60 POW 70 EDU 74 SAN 70 HP 14  
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 5

Attacks per round: 1  
Brawl 25%(12 / 5), Damage 1D3+1D4

Skills: Electronics 75%, Electrical Repair 65%, Mechanical Repair 65%, Computer Use 50%, Science (Physics) 50%, Language (English) 45%, Persuasion 25%, Library Use 65%, Psychology 30%, Credit Rating 45%

### **RITO SUKUDA (27), ENGINEER (HEAD OF SOFTWARE)**

Sukuda is an engineer in the same generation as Sayama Gai, who also completed a graduate degree through Oyama's Laboratory and joined KIoT.

As he is mostly in charge of software development, he doesn't have a deep understanding of the IoT chip's hardware. If the investigators need to consult with him about computers or Gai though, he could help.

STR 70 CON 85 SIZ 70 DEX 80 INT 80  
APP 60 POW 75 EDU 75 SAN 85 HP 16  
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8

Attacks per round: 1  
Brawl 45%(22 / 9), Damage 1D3+1D4

Skills: Computer Use 55%, Electrical Repair 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Science (Mathematics) 40%, Language (English) 40%, Electronics 35%, Persuasion 25%, Library Use 65%, Psychology 30%, Credit Rating 35%

### **REMAINING FIVE STAFF**

The other five KIoT personnel at least have 50% in their Computer Use, Electronics, Electrical Repair, and Mechanical Repair skills.

### **HUMAN-SUBDERMAL IOT CHIP CONTROL SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**

The investigators could ask the KIoT personnel to analyse the IoT chip, or use the company's facilities to analyse

the chip themselves. Should the investigators try it themselves, succeeding at both an **Electronics** and **Computer Use** roll allows them to both analyse the IoT chip and develop a program that can be used by a smartphone to interfere with a person or object embedded with the chip. These two rolls do not necessarily need to be a combined skill roll by a single investigator, but could be split between different investigators. An extreme success on the **Computer Use** roll completes the program in one hour, a Hard roll in two hours, and a Regular success in four hours. This program allows the user to stop or control humans or objects implanted with the Human-Subdermal IoT Chip.

However, as this is a makeshift program developed for hardware without full knowledge of its specification, full control of a target requires extreme skill. In most cases, stopping the target's movement may be all that's needed. To use the program requires a Hard **INT**, Regular **Pilot**, or Regular Operate Heavy Machinery roll, with a success stopping the target for 1D3 rounds. Succeeding the required roll by one extra difficulty step instead allows for control of the target for 1D3 rounds.

The application also has a map that displays the locations of targets implanted with the Human-Subdermal IoT chip. By checking this, the investigators see there are dozens of chips located in a certain place in Kyoto (Keeper Note: This is where Gai Sayama is located, as the Mi-Go possessing Gai always carries spare chips).

Outside of unexpected circumstances, when the investigators develop the application, Gai Sayama is at Spirit Draining Device in Kifune Shrine on Mount Kurama, preparing to perform the summon Azathoth ritual.

### **KIFUNE SHRINE**

A 30 minute walk from the Eizan Railway Kifune Entrance Station, or a 5 minute bus ride, brings the investigators to Kifune Shrine. Restaurants line the riverbanks on the way, and soon the torii (entrance gate of a shrine) and stone staircase come into view. Red-painted paper lanterns on the stone stairs and the surrounding autumn leaves make for a beautiful view. At the top of the stairs is the main hall of Kifune Shrine, and next to it the worship hall and secondary hall.

During daytime on holidays tourists crowd Kifune Shrine, and outside of late-night hours, there are likely shrine maidens present. If asked about Gai, the shrine maidens can say they often see him heading down a game trail off the side of the shrine grounds leading deep into the mountainside, but they have no idea where Gai goes.

### **MOUNTAIN GAME TRAIL**

The game trail is only wide enough for one person and surrounded by dense grass and trees. Following Gai's tracks requires succeeding a **Navigation** or **Track** roll. On a failure, roll 1D3 on the below event table. An event cannot be repeated, so once the investigators have encountered each event, they can reach the mountain clearing without another roll.

1. Monkey Encounter. Several monkeys approach the investigators, intent on stealing a random



item. Avoiding this requires a successful **Dodge** roll. On a failure, the monkeys take the item and disappear into the mountainside.

2. Boar Encounter. While on the path, a successful **Listen** roll lets investigators notice a rustling in the underbrush, just before a board bursts out! Investigators that heard the boar make a **Dodge** roll, while those that did make a **Dodge** roll with a penalty die. Failing the roll results in 1D4 damage. The boar then runs back off into the brush.
3. Mi-Go Controlled Homeless Himoji Ienashi Encounter. As they head up the path, the investigators come across a downtrodden-looking man lying at the base of a tree. Continuing down the trail would take the investigators right past him. If the investigators try to take a detour, he jumps up and runs after them. In either case, the investigators risk a chase. Unable to communicate, he simply attacks the investigators with his fists. Weakened from exposure in the mountains, he simply faints after receiving a single point of damage. He could be stopped or manipulated using the IoT software.

### **HIMOJI IENASHI (42) UNLUCKY CHIP-IMPLANTED HOMELESS MAN ABANDONED ON MOUNT KURAMA**

STR 50 CON 60 SIZ 50 DEX 55 INT 45  
APP 55 POW 40 EDU 10 SAN 18 HP 1 (Max 11)  
DB: +0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 50%(25 / 10), Damage 1D3

Skills: Stealth 60%, Credit Rating 2%, Jump 40%

### **MOUNTAIN CLEARING**

Continuing along the game trail, the investigators come to a clearing without grass, instead covered with gravel. About 10 metres away from the investigators a 1.5 metre spherical crystal sits upon a 3 metre wide by 1 metre tall pentagonal pedestal. Held within the crystal is the **POW** stolen from the investigators via the Spell Invocation events. Next to the crystal stands a person, and a 15 centimetre box sits on the ground next to him (which holds a few dozen Human-Subdermal IoT Chips).

The person is Gai Sayama. In his hands he works a silver-white object 10 centimetres wide by 10 centimetres thick (a Mi-Go Miniature Computer). When the investigators talk to him, Gai does not hide that he is summoning Azathoth. "I can't afford interruption before the festival. I'll lay you to rest here," he says as he strokes the face of the machine, and a shadow sweeps over the investigators while they hear mechanical sounds overhead.

### **THE FLYING SHRINE**

An unbelievable spectacle streaks over the investigators' heads. Somehow, the Kifune Shrine main hall the investigator

just saw a the foot of the mountain flies overhead on four jet engines firing out of its underside!

Then, roaring a great mechanical sound, the main hall lands between the investigators and Gai. The roof opens, revealing four robotic arms and two massive chainsaws. This incredible sight prompts a **SAN** 1/1D6 loss.

Each round, the 'Mechanised Kifune Shrine Main Hall' makes a total of two attacks with its Firearms (Offering Box Missiles (used on DEX+50)), Brawl (Arms), or Brawl (Chainsaw) abilities, as well as automatic attacks either of its Brawl abilities against anyone that tries to slip past it. An investigator that witnesses the main hall reactively attack a person or animal passing by it can notice this automatic attack system with a successful **INT** roll.

### **MECHANISED KIFUNE SHRINE MAIN HALL, FALLEN VICTIM TO THE MI-GO**

STR 160 CON 125 SIZ 150 DEX 35 HP 35  
DB: +3D6 Build: 4 Move: 2 / Flight 12

Attacks per round: 2

Brawl (Arms)\* 40%(20 / 8), Damage 1D3+Grappled

Brawl (Chainsaw)\* 20%(10 / 4), Damage 2D8

Firearms (Offering Box Missiles) 35%(17 / 7), Damage 2D3

\*As long as the shrine is not under the influence of an investigator's chip control software, the shrine's automatic interception system activates if someone tries to pass by it, immediately performing an attack with its arm or chainsaw, regardless of if it has already attacked this round.

### **FINAL BATTLE**

Combat begins when Kifune Shrine's main hall lands. The battlefield is as shown in the following map.

Kifune Shrine can be neutralised in the same way as implanted humans via the chip control software.

Generally, with a Hard **INT**, Regular **Pilot**, or Regular **Operate Heavy Machinery** roll, the shrine can be shut down for 1D3 rounds. Or, with one extra level of success, the shrine can be controlled for 1D3 rounds.

### **LAST STAND**

Should the investigators stop the summoning of Azathoth, in most cases the Mi-Go emerges from Gai. The Mi-Go then chooses a nearby investigator and attempts to Fuse into them and escape. The Keeper could read out the following:

*"You see something tear, crack, and break its way out of Gai Sayama. A pinkish crustaceous body rises from Gai, unfolding large bat-like wings, unfurling several sets of insect or fungal-like limbs. A bizarre ellipsoid where a head would be turns towards the investigators, its multitude of antennae wriggle in a way that feels like a hateful stare. In a sudden flash it kicks away from Gai's head and with a flap of its great wings, flies straight for one of you!"*

The targeted investigator has one chance to fight back or evade the charging Mi-Go's Meld, making either a **Fighting (Brawl)** or **Dodge** roll. Should the Mi-Go



successfully meld with an investigator, it attempts to escape either with a prepared Gate spell (Keeper Rulebook p.256) or by running into the woods. If the investigator successfully avoids the Mi-Go, it flees and flies off into the woods.

### DESTROYING THE SPIRIT DRAINING DEVICE

If the investigators destroy the Spirit Draining Device, the countless particles of light within the machine are released to fly off in various directions.

Should any of the investigators have lost **POW** during the scenario, some of the light flies into the investigator(s), who then recover the same amount of lost **POW**.

Similar phenomena occur throughout the city of Kyoto, with the people involved in the recent incidents regaining their vitality.

### AZATHOTH SUMMONED

Should the Mi-Go escape with its Spirit Draining Device, a few days later it completes the Summon Azathoth ritual. The Keeper may read the below passage:

*“Roiling dark clouds suddenly appear, and in the next moment, a massive red eye opens in their centre. From the corners of the great eye emerge countless grotesque creatures carrying flute-like instruments. As they descend to the earth, some of these beings fall close enough to you to get a good look at them. One of the things is a*

*toad-like monster, much larger than a human, a dirty-mud like flesh makes up its body. Its surface constantly writhes and squirms. Palp-like appendages growing out of the thing’s limbs can turn people into wordless flesh with a single stroke.*

*Looking down the foothills, you see people going mad. Some offer their lives, while some sacrifice others to the monsters. Other people fall into total despair and try to take their own lives. All the while the sky’s eye just gazes down upon this hellish world.”*

Seeing such a sight causes a 1D10/1D100 **SAN** roll. Investigators driven indefinitely insane are unable to move, becoming a husk simply awaiting physical death, or perhaps willingly choosing death. Investigators who maintained their sanity or didn’t completely go insane likely want to escape. Given such a hopeless situation, being able to survive to do so largely comes down to a **Luck** roll. Alternatively, a Keeper could allow an appropriate roll to operate a vehicle such as Drive Auto or a **Dodge** roll could be used to escape. Whether the investigators survive or perish, in an instant Kyoto becomes a city of the dead.

Should only the Mi-Go escape, it looks for another body to inhabit, and as it no longer has the Spirit Draining Device it begins planning a new way to gather **POW** to summon Azathoth. While the Mi-Go’s location and new plan is beyond the scope of this scenario, this Mi-Go could become the centre of a new campaign. Furthermore, a





cruel Keeper may decide the Mi-Go tires of gathering **POW** and instead simply uses 21 MP a day to cast Summon Azathoth. Even if the summoning failed, people may be exposed to Azathoth's miasma and suffer seizures similar to those caused by the Dread Curse of Azathoth, with the investigators becoming aware of the Mi-Go's continued plans by hearing about these phenomena.

## CONCLUSION

If the investigators defeat the Mi-Go, the incidents cease. If the Mi-Go escapes, its future actions are not covered in this scenario. The investigators may meet this Mi-Go again in the future, but even if they don't, the fear that the people around them may one day be possessed by an unknown entity likely takes a long time to overcome.

Should the Mi-Go take over and escape with an investigator's body, that investigator should make a **Luck** roll. On a success, they are found after a week in the mountains far from Kyoto, insane and behaving like a wild animal. This investigator loses 2D10 Sanity points, but after a few weeks in a mental institution they eventually recover. Should they fail the **Luck** roll, the unfortunate investigator may forever be lost without a trace.

## REWARDS

- Chasing the Mi-Go out of Gai's body: +1D4 Sanity points.
- Defeating the Mi-Go: +1D6 Sanity points.
- Destroying the Mi-Go Spirit Draining Device: +1D6 Sanity points.
- Destroying the Kifune Shrine Main Hall and feeling guilty: -1 Sanity point

## References

Fukuoka Shinnosuke, Kuwada Hiroshi, Rakuya Emi, Homu Shoji. 'Law and Strategy of IoT and AI' (2017)



# UNSEASONABLE BLOOMING AND MINUET

狂い咲きとメヌエツト

By Aka with Lom

## INTRODUCTION

This scenario uses the Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition Keeper Rulebook and is designed for a group of three to five players. It is set in modern day Japan, in December, and in the fictional Chugoku-region city of Hodaka. The playtime is around three to four hours, not including investigator creation.

The setting is modern day Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan (any year after 2015). The season is fall, but there is no issue with changing this to suit a campaign or other situations as needed.

The scenario starts when a mutual friend's sister goes missing while the investigators are visiting Hodaka City. The investigators should ideally already know each other. This scenario also makes use of social media, and the Keeper should have some understanding of how X, Instagram, TikTok or other social media works.

Furthermore, the investigation should proceed smoothly if at least one investigator has an interest in history.

This scenario is fictional and has no connection past or present to any real people, organisations, etc.

## KEEPER INFORMATION

In the Heian Era (the end of the 8th century ~ 12th century), Michizane Sugawara (Sugawara no Michizane) was a distinguished bureaucrat serving under Emperor Uda. However, after Emperor Uda abdicated, opposing nobles accused Michizane of a fabricated crime and planned to demote and relegate him to a remote posting. Emperor Emeritus (retired Emperor) Uda wanted to save Michizane, but as he had devoted himself to a Buddhist pilgrimage, he was late to arrive in Heiankyo (modern-day Kyoto, the capital of Japan during Heian Period). And when he did arrive, those jealous of Michizane's talent blocked the Emperor Emeritus from entering the Imperial Palace. To save Michizane, he went to Mt. Hodaka (fictional mountain in Hodaka City), where he built a small black shrine, and conducted a ritual to summon an Ayakashi (Japanese folk monster) in the hopes of causing a disaster in the capital. But his prayers went unheard, and the Ayakashi did not appear. Michizane was deposed and transferred to distant Dazaifu (in modern day Fukuoka).

The deposed Michizane left Heiankyo, heading for Dazaifu, but as the navigation technology of the time often depended heavily on the weather, under bad conditions ships would stop at nearby ports for weeks-long stays. One such storm stopped Michizane on his way to Dazaifu,

and the ship just happened to call into a port near Mt. Hodaka, where Emperor Uda had performed the ritual.

Michizane Sugawara would go on to end his life in Dazaifu, far away from Heiankyo. At the same moment of his death, on Mt. Hodaka, the Ayakashi which Emperor Uda had tried to contact was finally summoned. And as Emperor Uda had wished, the Ayakashi caused calamities to befall the capital. Emperor Emeritus Uda realised the disasters rocking the capital were due to his ritual, and so he sealed the Ayakashi in a plum tree at the summit of Mt. Hodaka.

Over a millennia later, in modern day Hodaka, a rumour starts among high school girls of an unseasonably blooming plum tree at the summit of Mt. Hodaka. As the rumour spread, several high school students set off to the summit of Mt. Hodaka for a charm called 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune.' In reality, the unseasonable blooming is caused by the Ayakashi sealed in the plum tree. The flowers bloom as the tree grows from the warmth drawn from its surroundings. In turn, those that come close to it freeze over. This is the fate that befall the unfortunate missing high school girl now all over the news.

If the plum tree is left alone, the cold eventually drifts all the way down to the bottom of the mountain. In the end, the Ayakashi, sealed away by Emperor Uda, is resurrected.

The investigators must save Kotomi Uda and prevent the resurrection of the legendary Ayakashi of Michizane Sugawara.

## MAIN NPCS

### JUNICHI UDA

The investigators' friend, working at a publishing company. He graduated from the Literature Department in his university, where he majored in Ancient Japanese language. A serious young man who rarely smiles, he reads nearly thirty books a month. His family owns a manor in Hodaka that currently sits vacant. He often seems overprotective of his younger sister, Kotomi Uda.

There is a legend in the Uda family of a sealed Ayakashi, summoned by their ancestor, Emperor Uda. While Junichi has heard of this rumor, he doesn't know any particular details. Furthermore, Kotomi has heard nothing of this legend.



**JUNICHI UDA (24), FRIEND OF THE INVESTIGATORS AND DESCENDANT OF**



**EMPEROR UDA**

STR 65 CON 55 SIZ 70 DEX 50 INT 70  
APP 70 POW 65 EDU 72 SAN 65 HP 13  
DB: +1D4 Build:1 Move:6

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35%(17 / 7), Damage 1D3 + 1D4

Skills: Language (Archaic Japanese) 60%, Library Use 60%, Charm 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Persuasion 55%, Psychology 45%, History 40%, Drive Auto, Dodge 35%, Language (English) 35%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 20%

**KOTOMI UDA**



A third grade high school student (senior year/grade 12), currently studying hard for university entrance exams.

As a child, while living in Hodaka for three years, she was friends with Sumi Watase. The rumour of 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune' charm is popular at Sumi's school, Hodaka High School. The charm is as simple as taking a picture of a plum blossom and praying at Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine. Hearing the rumour from Sumi, Kotomi hiked up Mt. Hodaka with Sumi to see the plum blossoms.

**KOTOMI UDA (17), VICTIM AND JUNICHI'S SISTER**

STR 40 CON 55 SIZ 50 DEX 40 INT 70  
APP 85 POW 75 EDU 63 SAN 75 HP 11  
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move:6

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 25%(12 / 5), Damage 1D3

Skills: Library Use 35%, History 20%, Psychology 20%, Credit Rating 10%

**OPENING**

The investigators are invited by their mutual friend, Junichi Uda, on a 2 day, 3 night trip to Hodaka City in the Chugoku region, with Junichi saying his family owns a manor in Hodaka.

Hodaka is a city with a population of under 300,000 people. It takes about five hours by bullet train or three and a half hours by plane from Tokyo to reach the city. Hodaka is a city with large shopping centres, good public transit, and is also known as an academic city with many educational institutions, such as Hodaka High School and Hodaka University.

Hodaka also houses the famous Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine. Michizane Sugawara praised Mt. Hodaka as a 'great and auspicious mountain' during his lifetime and resided at its base for a time, leading to the construction of the shrine. Souvenir shops, as well as stands selling plum rice cakes, which were a favourite of Michizane Sugawara, are set up around the shrine. Also, as Michizane Sugawara was a scholar in life, Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine is reputed to grant blessing for academic success.

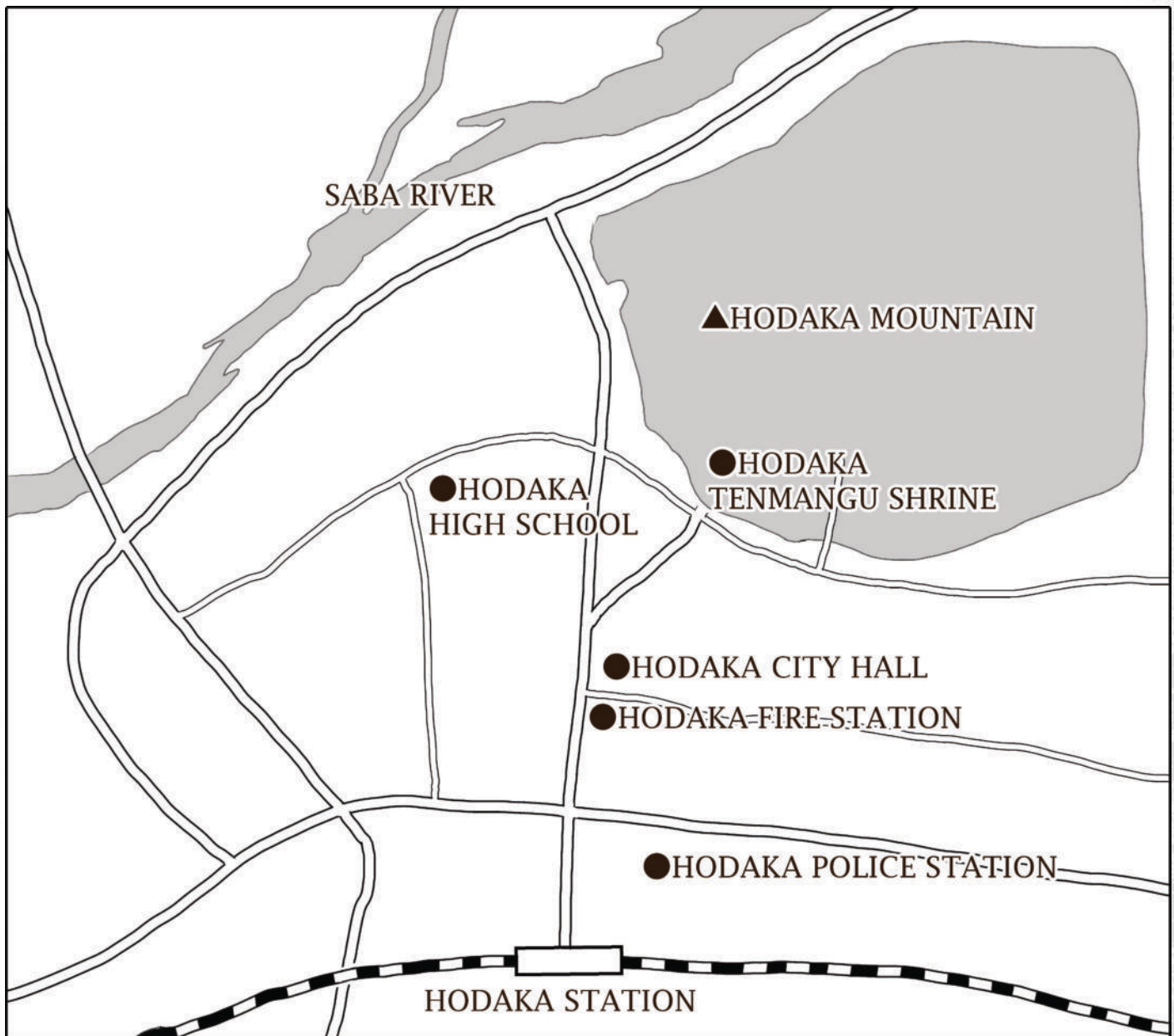
Junichi Uda and his sister, Kotomi, lived in Hodaka for a time in their childhood. Junichi planned this trip for Kotomi, who is preparing for her university entrance exams and wanted to visit Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine.

On the way to Hodaka, the investigators see Kotomi constantly using her smartphone. A **Spot Hidden** roll lets them see she is checking her social media accounts. If asked, she explains as it's been a long time since she's visited Hodaka she's contacting an old friend.

The investigators arrive in Hodaka on a rainy evening on December 14th. The Uda family manor is a ten minute walk from Hodaka Station. The red bricks of the mansion eventually appear through the rain. Including its garden, the Uda manor is comparatively large, its grounds about four times the size of the neighbouring houses. Junichi ushers the investigators into the manor's guest room.

Kotomi suggests going to Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine the next day to buy charms when the shrine office opens. She also tells Junichi and the investigators she's going to eat with an old classmate from elementary school, leaving





the investigators and Junichi to part ways with Kotomi before dinner.

As the investigators eat dinner the rain falls harder and the distant rumble of thunder can be heard, though the thunder grows steadily closer. At around 8pm, at least one of the investigators sees the following information on the news. Depending on the dining situation multiple investigators could see or hear it, or a lone person might read it on the internet.

#### **High School Girl, Whereabouts Unknown, Hodaka City**

On December 12th, at approximately 9:30pm, a 110 call was received in Hodaka Nishi-Nakano, reporting that their daughter had not returned home. She went missing after parting ways with a friend on the way home after school. Police are continuing to investigate the incident. (December 14th)

Soon after seeing this news, Junichi receives a call from Kotomi's phone. The investigators can overhear her terribly shaking voice. She stutters out '*Junichi, what should I do... Help me, I'm so cold...*' Those near Junichi then hear a sudden roar echo through the phone's speakers just before the call is cut short. Attempting to call her back only receives an automatic message stating the power is off. Hearing this causes a 0/1 **SAN** loss as the investigators think it may be connected to the news they just saw or read.

A successful **Listen** roll allows investigators to notice the roar heard over the phone was almost the same as the nearby thunder.

Junichi says that Kotomi was most likely meeting with a friend named Watase for dinner at the restaurant Shiwasu-Tei, and he also shares Watase's address. Junichi heads to the police to report about his sister and explain the situation, but he first tells the investigators his sister



sounded like she was in trouble and asks them to help find her.

With an **INT** roll, the investigators recall Kotomi had often been using her smartphone, and one avenue of investigation may be through her social media.

## INVESTIGATION

### INTERNET AND NEWS

The following information regarding the missing high school girl can be found through newspapers, online news, or TV news.

- The missing high school girl did not post anything on social media or do anything that would give motive for her disappearance. There is also no evidence or witnesses pointing to where she may have been kidnapped.
- Investigations continue into whether bullying or some other cause occurred at Hodaka High School.
- The missing girl's last trace was in Hodaka City, as captured by a security camera.

Searching further on social media requires a **Library Use** or **Computer Use** roll and three hours, with a success allowing the investigators to find Kotomi's social media accounts and obtain the following information. Alternatively, the investigators can find the same information if they asked for Kotomi's account name from Junichi. However, as Junichi is in a rush to go to the police, asking for Kotomi's account information requires a **Fast Talk** roll.

- Multiple posts indicate Kotomi fretted over her poor academic performance and was under pressure to pass her entrance exams.
- Starting on December 14th, Kotomi's account frequently contacted another account named 'Sumimi.' The Sumimi account uploaded an image of a plum tree around 7pm on December 14th.
- The Sumimi account uploaded the plum tree picture with the text 'Academic Success Charm' and 'Share for Better Grades!'
- After that, the Sumimi account has a number of posts full of unintelligible text. See the following 'Sumimi Account Posts' for details.

### SUMIMI ACCOUNT POSTS

The Sumimi account was created around two years ago. Checking its post history, the account is clearly that of a Hodaka High School student.

If the investigators check the posts from December 14th, they find the following (the investigators find nothing of interest from December 13th or before).

These are the last posts on the Sumimi account. Seeing these unnerving posts costs the investigators 0/1 **SAN**. Furthermore, the last post's upload time coincides with Kotomi's phone call. (Keeper Note: Sumimi is the account

of Sumi Watase, who Kotomi met up with. She made the nonsensical posts around 8:04pm as she went insane.

12/14 17:32 Going to see the plum tree with my friend today!

12/14 19:49 Hiking sucks, right? I'd have given up by now - Glad we're together!

12/14 20:01 Made it! Wow! Freezing though! My fingers are shaking

12/14 20:01 (Picture of a plum tree. There is one plum tree in the center of the picture. A blossom is in focus, with the surroundings indiscernible) #AcademicSuccessCharm #ShareforBetterGrades #TenJinSama'sFortune

12/14 20:04 ra

12/14 20:04 ha ra wa ma a ka ra wo i ra chi wa ki sa ma ka ri to mo no na shi ru sa yu ke ta ri chi ma ko ro me chi ra i na mi na mo ra i so i

12/14 20:04 i a go ke ia wa o ka wo ki ba bi ne mo a shi pa ki bu ne su e di sa a wa ri ni su to he ru a ra hi ni a ra ha ra ma a ka tsu ka ya nu mi o i mu o to u ra

(TL Note: the last three posts are written entirely in Hiragana, the Japanese phonetic characters. In this case, without context or Kanji (Chinese characters), it is unintelligible.)

### TENJIN-SAMA'S FORTUNE

The investigators may look into the 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune' text in Sumimi's posts, finding the phrase to be present in posts along with pictures of plum blossoms by many accounts over the last week. Looking at the pictures along with the 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune' sequential over time, it is clear the blossoms open more and more. A successful **Art/Craft (Photography)**, **Survival**, or **Science (Biology)** with a Bonus Die roll reveals that the plum blossoms in the picture are all of the same variety. Additionally, with a successful **Computer Use** or **Library Use** roll the investigators surmise Hodaka High School students made all the posts.

Regarding the plum blossoms, an investigator with a successful **Nature** or **Science (Biology)** roll knows this type of plum tree usually blossoms around February. The investigator would also know that the phenomenon of unseasonable blooming can be due to a warmer than usual winter or insect damage (note that this scenario takes place during a bitterly colder than usual December for Hodaka City).

A successful **Knowledge** roll regarding the phrase 'Tenjin-sama' allows the investigator to know that Emperor Ichijou deified Michizane Sugawara as 'Tenjin' after his death. If an investigator succeeds with a **History** roll, they know the further details of Michizane Sugawara deification:



- Tenjin is the Michizane Sugawara who lived during the Heian Period. Nowadays, he is prayed to by examinees as the ‘god of learning’, but in the past he was feared as the ‘Tatari-Gami’ (curse god).
- Michizane Sugawara was a renowned Sinologist, poet, and politician, but he was falsely accused of plotting rebellion, demoted, and cast away far from the capital, where he finished his life in despair.
- After Michizane’s death, those complicit in his exiling died one after another due to illness or lightning strikes. Furthermore, a series of severe droughts, cold summers, heavy rains, floods, typhoons, large earthquakes, and other such disasters killed many citizens.
- Believing the disasters to be the curse of Michizane, Emperor Ichijou deified Michizane as ‘Tenjin’ (Japanese god of thunder) as well as posthumously promoted him to the highest court rank of Grand Minister. After this, the decades of curse-like turmoil that had followed Michizane’s death finally came to an end.

### KOTOMI’S BELONGINGS

To trace Kotomi’s whereabouts, the investigators may try to examine her belongings. However, she brought as little as possible on this trip, with the only thing of interest the investigators can find being her journal. An entry on December 14th reads ‘*Going with Sumi to see plum blossoms.*’

### SUMI WATASE INVESTIGATION SUMI WATASE’S HOME

Sumi Watase’s home is an eight minute walk from Hodaka Station, or about a five minute walk from the Uda manor. Using a taxi or bus doesn’t get there much sooner or later considering waiting time.

When visiting Sumi’s home, her father receives the investigators. After explaining the situation to Sumi’s father, he explains his daughter had gone to eat dinner with Kotomi at the cafe Shiwasu-Tei in front of the station. He also of course says he worried about her not returning.

After confirming he cannot contact his daughter by cell phone, Sumi’s father gives his contact information to the investigators. He says ‘*My daughter is always looking at social media on her phone, so it would be strange for her not to notice its battery dying.*’

If the investigators further question Sumi’s father, he answers as far as he is able.

### SHIWASU-TEI

Shiwasu-Tei is a cafe in front of Hodaka Station. The front door is made of wood, and the sign outside reads it serves good food as well as drinks. A bell rings when the door opens, and inside are a range of patrons, from individuals enjoying a cup of coffee to groups eating meals. The cafe is open from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm.

If the investigators question the staff, they can say that two girls who looked like high school students came to

eat around 7:30 pm, and the staff overheard them saying something about ‘Tenjin-sama’ and saw them using their phones while talking. For more details about the girls’ conversation, a successful Group **Luck** roll allows the staff to have heard the following:

- The girls talked about going to see plum blossoms. The staff remembered this as they thought plum trees wouldn’t be blooming yet.

### JUNICHI RETURNS HOME

Junichi returns home on December 14th around 11:00 pm. If the investigators are still out at this time, Junichi calls them. He will also go to the police station the next day (December 15th).

Junichi learned the following information at the police station:

- The police believe Kotomi’s case to be connected to another missing person’s case involving a high school student on December 12th. The missing girl is Kaho Taketa, a student at Hodaka High School. Junichi does not know Kaho Taketa.
- After Junichi went to the police, Sumi’s parents also reported their daughter as missing. They also reported that Sumi had gone out to dinner with Kotomi.
- According to Sumi’s parents, Kaho Taketa is a classmate of Sumi.
- The police are searching Hodaka City, but so far found nothing.

### HODAKA HIGH SCHOOL

Hodaka High School is located almost centrally in Hodaka City, and commuting to the school is easy for those living in the city. Hodaka High School is also a well regarded High School throughout the prefecture, with many students admitted every year to faculties of medicine, pharmacy, law, etc. at national or public universities. Its school rules are relatively loose.

There is one cherry tree by the school entrance and dozens more planted behind the school building. Although not seen during the scenario, they bloom beautiful flowers in spring.

Investigators must speak with the security guard to enter the school, though it’s probably best for the Keeper to be flexible in granting permission based on the investigators’ ideas. With a reasonable excuse they should be allowed entry after a successful **Persuade** roll, or if going in with Sumi Watase’s parents (though in this case, they may need an **Interpersonal** Skill roll to convince Sumi’s parents to come), or other ways they might think up.

If the investigators successfully speak with the security guard, he can pass them on to Sumi Watase and Kaho Taketa’s homeroom teacher. He worries about his students and answers any questions the investigators may ask. Additionally, he teaches biology, being a graduate of Hodaka University, Faculty of Science, Department of Biology, and can answer questions about plants.



- Kaho Taketa and Sumi Watase didn't have any particular issues, and the school doesn't know of any cases of bullying.
- The 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune' thing is going around the class lately. As he's the biology teacher, many students have asked him about plum blossoms.
- The pictures used for blessings are said to have been taken behind Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine. Supposedly if you bring a picture of this plum blossom to Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine to pray, Tenjin-sama will grant you good grades.
- A cold is currently going around the class. It's quite a headache leading up to the exams period. And some students are even showing symptoms like hypothermia.

Questioning students on their way to and from school requires an appropriate **Interpersonal** Skill roll, and can reveal the following information. If questioning students inside the school, the investigators likely should wait until a break or after school.

- The 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune' good luck charm is popular among some of the third-grade girls.
- Supposedly if you bring a picture of this plum blossom to Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine to pray, Tenjin-sama will grant you good grades.
- Rumor has it that bringing a photo of plum blossoms taken from elsewhere to Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine will anger Tenjin-sama, and he will punish you with worse grades.

If the investigators ask if there is anyone who has actually taken a picture of the plum blossoms, students say they don't know if it's true or not, but there are a few people who supposedly did, and they are now the same third-grade students who are now sick with colds. A successful **Psychology** roll makes it apparent there is something more that is difficult for the student to say. If pressed further, the student can say the following.

*'Well, the girls that prayed to Tenjin-sama got sick. Like, it's hard for them to move. I think they must have all been lying about the pictures. Plums aren't even blossoming now! They probably just said it to stand out... Maybe Tenjin-sama is punishing them?'*

Should the investigators try to infiltrate the school, getting over the school wall requires a Climb roll, and moving through the grounds unnoticed requires a Stealth roll. A **Spot Hidden** roll could also reveal a place where they can crawl under the wall.

### HODAKA TENMANGU SHRINE

Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine is set at the base of Mt. Hodaka. It's a fifteen minute walk from Hodaka Station, and the road straight from the station passes through a small arcade before reaching the shrine torii. Souvenir shops, sweet-shops selling the plum cakes Michizane Sugawara once loved, and cafes line the arcade. Reaching the front entrance of the shrine requires climbing 120 stone steps.

At the top of the steps and to the right are lavatories, while in front of the steps is the two-storied tower gate to the shrine grounds. The roof of the tower gate is green and its pillars red. Passing through the gate reveals the worship hall, its roof is also red, while the dark wood of its pillars and walls is unpainted. Also, though it cannot be seen from the front, the main hall is located in the back.

Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine was built in what is now modern-day Hodaka City in the year 932. This is where Michizane Sugawara stopped at when he was exiled to Dazaifu. While staying for weeks due to bad weather, Michizane took quite a liking to Mt. Hodaka. Since then, Mt. Hodaka has continued to be a popular place in relation to Michizane, and so it was decided to construct Tenmangu Shrine here.

Day and night, pamphlets containing the following information can be found at the shrine office.

Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine was built in what is now modern-day Hodaka City in the year 932. This is where Sugawara no Michizane stopped at when he was exiled to Dazaifu. While staying for weeks due to bad weather, Michizane took quite a liking to Mt. Hodaka. Since then, Mt. Hodaka has continued to be a popular place in relation to Michizane, and so it was decided to construct Tenmangu Shrine here.

Additionally, if the investigators did not succeed in a **History** roll regarding the 'Tenjin-sama' phrase, or did not research 'Tenjin-sama,' they could learn about Michizane Sugawara's history here.

The pamphlet also includes a tourist map of Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine (Handout: Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine grounds map).

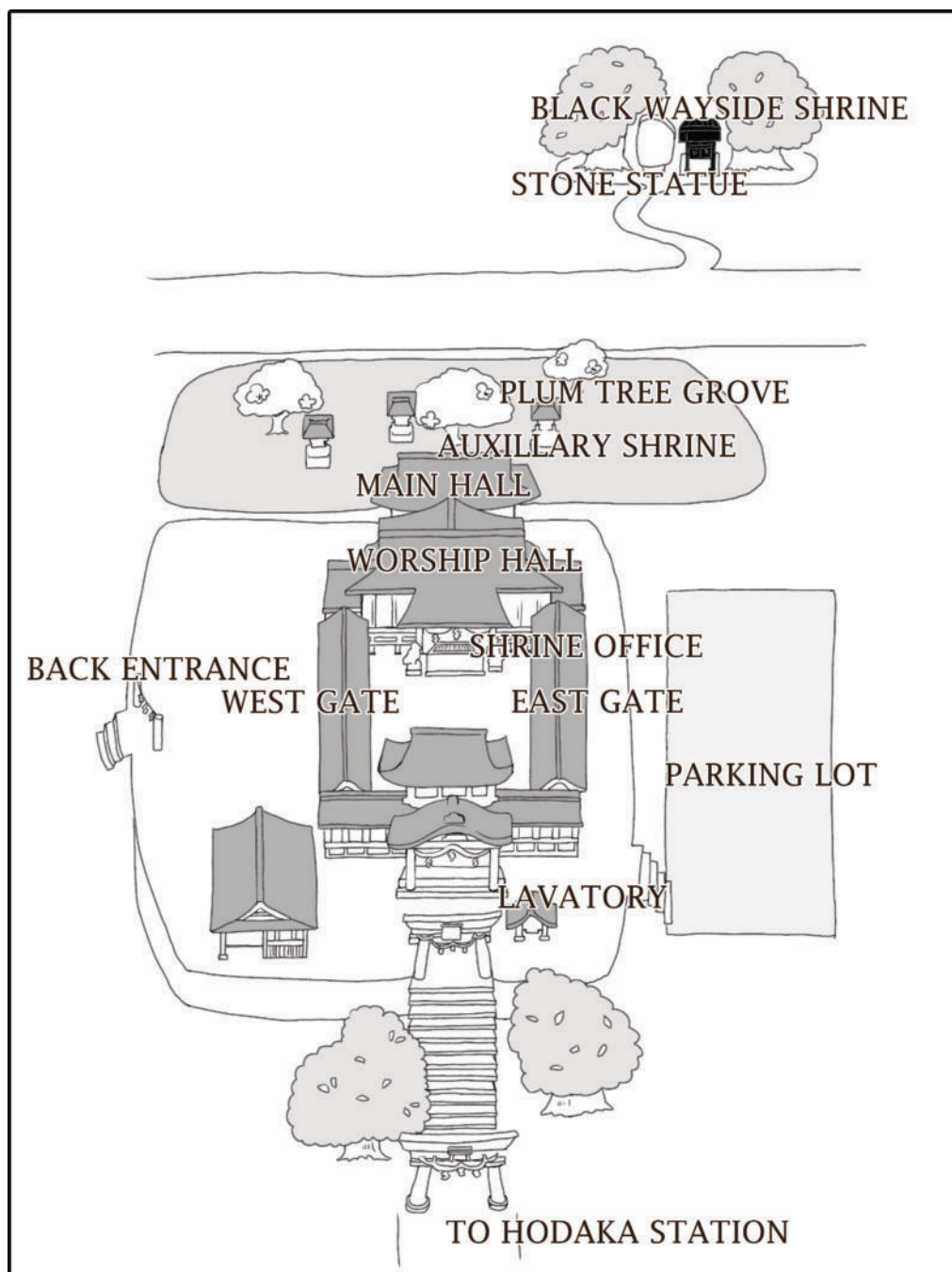
If the investigators visit during the day, the head priest and other shrine employees are present, and can provide the following information.

- Since about a week ago they have often seen Hodaka High School students. The students head behind the back of Tenmangu Shrine, perhaps to see the subsidiary shrine where the plum trees are planted.
- Behind Tenmangu Shrine and part way up Mt. Hodaka, sits a stone monument inscribed with a poem recited by Sugawara no Michizane when he had been demoted. Why it was placed here is unknown.

If asked about the black wayside shrine set up beside the stone monument, the staff can explain the following as well.

- There is a story that Emperor Uda, who had always believed in Michizane Sugawara, built the wayside shrine. As the story goes, Emperor Uda built the small shrine to pray for Michizane Sugawara when he had been falsely accused.
- Afterwards, Emperor Uda's descendants built a mansion near the shrine and continued to man-





age it. That mansion was rebuilt, about ten minutes away from the station. Even now, members of the Uda family still regularly clean the wayside shrine.

Over thirty plum trees of various varieties are planted around a subsidiary shrine behind Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine, though none of them are in bloom.

When the investigators come here, they may find someone tending to the plum trees. This is the caretaker, hired by Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine to maintain the plum trees. The investigators can learn the following by talking with the caretaker.

- Lately the temperature nearby has been abnor-

mally dropping, causing trouble as the trees weaken. Even within Hodaka City, the area around the shrine is particularly cold. The caretaker is taking urgent measures to protect the plum trees.

- No plum trees within the Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine grounds are in bloom.
- The caretaker has lately seen high school students passing by the subsidiary shrine on the way to Mt. Hodaka. He has no idea what they were doing.
- If the investigators come on December 14th, he can remember someone heading up the mountain, but doesn't remember any particular characteristics.



If the investigators come to the shrine at night, there are very few lights, making it difficult to look around for anything of notice. If they have a light and have a reason to look behind the shrine, or if someone told them to look around Mt. Hodaka, they could find the path to the stone monument and wayside shrine across the road behind the main shrine. They could also find the stone monument and wayside shrine if they see it mentioned in the pamphlet. If searching at random around the entire Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine, even with a light, thirty minutes and an Extreme **Spot Hidden** roll are required to find anything useful.

### STONE MONUMENT AND SMALL SHRINE

As the investigators leave Hodaka Tenmangu Shrine ground and head for Mt. Hodaka, they suddenly feel cold. An investigator without winter goods (heat pack, pocket warmer, etc.) must make CON roll, and on a failure loses 1 HP.

After walking about two minutes, investigators find three large trees estimated to be about 500 years old. There is a stone monument about 3 metres high and a pitch-black Hokora (small shrine) in the centre of the trees. A Waka poem is engraved on the stone monument which reads: *'Kochi fukaba Nioi okoseyo ume no hana aruji nasitote haruna wasureso'* (When the east wind blows let it send your fragrance, my dear plum blossoms, and do not forget the spring though I'm not here). With a successful **Know**, **History**, or **Art/Craft (Literature)** roll, investigators realise that this Waka poem was composed by Michizane Sugawara when he was demoted.

The black Hokora next to the stone monument is about 1.5 m high and 1 m wide. The pillars and roof are painted black, and there are hinged double doors at the centre of the front side. This Hokora is old but well cared for.

When investigators open the door of the Hokora, they find an old wooden tablet. One side of the wooden tablet is signed 'Sadami Uda.' The other side is filled with small letters, requiring a **Language (Japanese)** roll with a penalty die to understand. On a success, the investigator finds that the letter means *'I will pray to Mt. Hodaka, a mountain with miraculous virtue, to avenge on behalf of Michizane. O Spirit who has the power to wreak his grudge, come to the mountaintop. All things are frozen, and all things are struck by lightning. Bring every disaster to the imperial capital.'*

After examining the stone monuments and shrines, investigators can find human footprints leading to the mountaintop with a **Track** or Hard **Spot Hidden** roll.

### UDA MANSION

The investigators may ask Junichi about the wooden tablet found inside the black wayside shrine. Junichi is aware of his familial connection to Emperor Uda, and can share the following information about the Emperor and Sugawara no Michizane's relationship.

- Emperor Uda highly regarded Michizane Sugawara. Sadami Uda was Emperor Uda's pre-ascension name.
- After abdication and becoming Emperor Emeritus

Uda, those surrounding Michizane Sugawara shunned his excellence, falsely accused him of plotting rebellion, and demoted him. Devoting himself to Buddhism at the time, Emperor Emeritus Uda was delayed in saving Michizane Sugawara.

- Emperor Emeritus Uda rushed to Kyoto to save Michizane Sugawara, but those who had plotted against Michizane Sugawara blocked Emperor Emeritus Uda from entering the imperial palace, and Michizane Sugawara was demoted.

Junichi also thinks there may be records stored in the mansion with more detailed information, as he heard that historically important items are preserved in the attic.

Junichi can guide the investigators to the attic, which can be entered using a ladder at the end of the second floor hallway. The attic is dark and dusty without lights, and seems to have been left unused for a long time. Shining a light around the room reveals countless piles of old junk on the floor and shelves, along with heaps of wooden tablets and stacks of tattered paper.

Searching for anything useful here requires thirty minutes and a **Spot Hidden** roll. Successful investigators find a ceremonial sword engraved with a dragon (note: cannot be used as a weapon), a rosary, and an old letter that looks to have been written by Emperor Emeritus Uda.

The letter is written with archaic words, requiring a Hard **Language (Japanese)** roll, or a regular **Language (Archaic Japanese)** roll, with a success allowing full understanding of its contents.

### EMPEROR EMERITUS UDA'S LETTER

*'I was tormented by Michizane's demotion and tried to help him, but I was refused entry into the imperial palace. Therefore, I decided to borrow the power of an Ayakashi. I thought to have the Ayakashi attack Kyoto, and in the chaos save Michizane. However, while I prepared and prayed at the shrine for several days to summon the Ayakashi, I received word that Michizane had been demoted. Thinking the ritual had failed, I ceased my prayers and returned to the capital.*

*Later, on the day of Michizane's death, perhaps from some twist of fate, the Ayakashi returned and lightning struck Kyoto. Even though I had stopped visiting the shrine, for some reason it had come back. Maybe it answered Michizane's regret, and a final prayer reached that wayside shrine.*

*Following the guidance of the book I had read before, I sealed the Ayakashi in a plum tree on the summit of Mt. Hodaka. Although it has assimilated into the plum tree, it is still alive there. As proof, no matter how many times servants tried to cut down the tree, every time they were almost struck by lightning.*

*I am approaching the end of my life, but my only worry is that the seal will someday break. To my descendants, I leave the method for re-sealing the tree.*

*Use the sword enshrined with this note, the Kurikara Dragon Sword, drive it into the plum tree, and offer your life blood. Then, holding the rosary beads, recite the following chant repeatedly. 'If only there had been a*



*world without the spring wind, I could watch the flowers in tranquillity.'*

(Keeper Note: See the Climax section for more details on the ritual)

## CLIMAX

While walking up the trail to the mountain summit, an investigator with a successful **Nature** roll, or **Science (Biology)** roll with a bonus die, notices that after leaving the stone monument and wayside shrine they haven't seen or heard any birds or insects. A further **Nature** or **Spot Hidden** roll closer to the summit allows investigators to spot withering plants here and there. Approaching the summit, all nearby plant life is dead. Bare of leaves, the trees are just naked trunks and branches. There is no grass or brush. Investigators seeing this abnormal scene take 0/1D3 **SAN** loss.

Continuing further, the clouds covering the sky grow thicker. The rain progressively begins to turn to hail. Each step crunches, and looking down, frost covers the ground. Breath plumes white and the investigators' fingertips turn red. An investigator without a pocket warmer or other source of heat must make a **CON** roll, and on a failure lose 1D3 HP due to the cold.

When they reach the top, the investigators see the withered trees, some with trunks snapped in half. White chunks hang from branches, and closer inspection reveals them to be blocks of ice. Some fallen trees are completely encased in ice. Some chunks are big enough to fit an entire person within. In the centre of this scene, a single tree stands unbroken and bearing flowers. As if absorbing the heat from their surroundings, the blossoming plum flowers are about to reach full bloom.

The investigators find Kotomi and another girl lying at the base of the plum tree. Something feels oppressively strange, though. Compared to the tree, the girls seem extremely small. As they approach, one step at a time, they realise what seemed strange. The plum tree is huge to the point of being distorted. The trunk spreads a metre thick and towers ten metres high, while its blossoms, which normally are only about three centimetres, grow to a massive thirty centimetres. The blooming flowers radiate a fantastical beauty.

When the investigators get closer to try to help the girls, the 'Plum Tree-Assimilated Ayakashi' battle begins.

After approaching the girls, the cold air around the massive plum tree suddenly becomes frigid. The investigators feel as if their body heat is being directly sucked out. Worse, in front of their eyes, ice freezes over the girls' hands and feet. Immediately after that, the trunk of the tree bends and wriggles as if alive. The branches extend in all directions, stabbing at the investigators.

During the fight, the investigators are attacked by the 'Heat Drain' at the end of every round. Whenever **DEX** is drained from this attack, the investigators may make an **INT** roll. On a success, they realize the few remaining buds on the 'Plum Tree-Assimilated Ayakashi' begin to bloom.

## SEALED AYAKASHI

STR n/a CON n/a SIZ 60 DEX 32 (at start) INT 15  
POW 22 HP 25

DB: 0 Build: 4 Move: 0

Attacks per round: 1D3 attacks a round  
Brawl (Branch Stab) 70% (35 / 14), Damage 1D4+1  
Lightning\* 45% (22/9), Damage 1D8+stun

Armour: 1 point of thick wood\*\*

SAN Loss' 1D3/1D6+1 to see the writhing trunk of the Plum Tree-Assimilated Ayakashi and feel the heat drained from the surroundings.

\*Anyone struck by the Sealed Ayakashi's lightning bolt must succeed an opposed **CON** roll against the amount of damage taken x5, or be stunned for 1D2 combat rounds. The lightning attack can only be used once every two combat rounds.

\*\*When sprayed with herbicide, if a liquid type is used and depending on the amount, the Sealed Ayakashi can be immediately damaged. A bucket of herbicide deals 1D10+2 damage on a successful Throw or **Fighting (Brawl)** roll. A high-pressure pump built with a successful **Mechanical Repair** or **Electrical Repair** can deal an additional +1D6 damage. If used in a water gun, small kinds give a bonus die, use **Firearms (Handgun)**, can be fired three times a round, and deal 1D3 damage. A large water gun also grants one bonus die, uses **Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun)**, can be fired twice a round, and deals 1D3+2 damage.

With a powder-type of herbicide, the effect is not immediate. In general, it takes effect after a few days to a few weeks, meaning that in regards to this scenario, it likely does not work in time to stop the Sealed Ayakashi's return. If the investigators try to prepare this type of herbicide in advance, a successful **INT** roll or **Nature** roll with a bonus die lets them know of this weakness.

## SEALING RITUAL

If the investigators choose to perform the sealing ritual, the process is as follows. As the combat begins, the Keeper can explain the following rules.

First, to get close to the Plum Tree requires a successful **DEX** or **CON** roll. This roll can be attempted once per round without taking up the investigator's action. On the other hand, moving away from the plum tree does not require a roll.

Stabbing with the Kurikara Dragon Sword requires either a **STR** roll for a forceful thrust, a **POW** roll for careful stab, or a **Fighting (Brawl)** roll.

When offering life blood, an unharmed person would need to use their turn to lose 1 HP. However, an injured person would not need to use their turn or lose any HP. Furthermore, the person who gives their life blood and the person wielding the Kurikara Dragon Sword may be different people.

The chant may be performed the next turn after stabbing the Kurikara Dragon sword and offering life blood. It requires one combat round and either a successful **CON** roll to focus on moving their mouth in the cold, or an **INT** roll to focus on reciting the chant accurately. If at



least one investigator succeeds, the ritual is completed at the end of the combat round.

When the ritual is complete, a pale violet light engulfs the plum tree. The blossoms then begin fluttering, and one by one split apart into smaller, regular-sized flowers. Seeing the small blossoms, the oppressive sensation leaves the investigators. The tree trunk ceases its wriggling, and looking at the sky, the cloud cover dissipates to reveal the sun or moon light. At the same time, the feeling of heat benign sucked out of the investigators also fades.

If any investigator had lost **DEX** due to the 'Heat Drain,' they gradually recover their lost **DEX** by the next morning.

Furthermore, the sealing ritual can stop only the 'Plum Tree-Assimilated Ayakashi's' branch attacks and Heat Drain ability. The lightning bolt attack cannot be completely contained, and instead changes as follows.

Lightning 15%, Damage 1d8+Stun (See Sealed Ayakashi's Lightning)

This attack occurs when the investigators move to make an action that would harm the sealed plum tree. This is the Ayakashi's last-ditch resistance.

### FELLING THE PLUM TREE

The investigators may directly defeat the plum tree rather than attempt the sealing ritual, or if they did not find the sealing ritual.

When the investigators directly defeat the Sealed Ayakashi the plum blossoms begin to tremble. Then, their petals turn black and fall to the ground one by one.

When the last petal has fallen, the thick clouds overhead clear. At the same time, the sensation of heat draining from the investigators bodies also disappears.

Before the investigators' eyes, the tree that had been tormenting them withers and shrinks as if its life force is sucked away. The Keeper could also prepare a depiction that matches the final attack performed by the investigators. The investigators no longer feel the oppressive threat from the plum tree, and should be convinced the mysterious incident is over.

### THE AYAKASHI'S REVIVAL

When the Sealed Ayakashi's **DEX** reaches 300, the Ayakashi is resurrected. Should the investigators request the cooperation of the police or others, the Ayakashi can absorb more **DEX** every round, likely speeding up its revival.

From the thick clouds overhead and with a roar, a dazzling flash of light falls onto the plum tree, and the ground shakes violently underfoot.

Once the investigators' eyes adjust to the light, they see the plum tree scorched black and split in two. The inside of the tree is hollow, as if someone inside the tree had broken their way out. Despite the violent situation, for some reason not a single blossom fell or was burnt.

Then the investigators spot a figure floating several metres over the plum tree.

Overhead is a huge mass of black, swirling clouds, an Ayakashi with a distorted human face and dressed in Heian-era clothing. With lightning flashing across itself

as if burning with uncontrollable rage, it stares down on the investigators.

### RESURRECTED SUGAWARA NO MICHIZANE, LEGENDARY AYAKASHI

STR n/a CON n/a SIZ 60 DEX 150 INT 75

POW 110 HP 25

DB: 0 Build: 4 Move: 100

Attacks per round: 1

Wind Claw 70% (35 / 14), Damage 5D6 (Damage ignores any armour)

Lightning Bolt\* 80% (40 / 16), Damage 2D10+Stun+Potential death

Heat Drain (Automatic), Damage 3D6 CON, 2D6 STR, 1D6 APP per round

Armour: None, however only attacks targeting INT or POW can cause damage.

SAN Loss: 1D4/1D20 SAN to see the resurrected Ayakashi.

\*Those struck by the Legendary Ayakashi's lightning are stunned for a number of rounds equal to the damage taken. Furthermore, they must succeed an opposed CON roll against the damage taken x5, or suffer a fatal heart attack.

### CONCLUSION

Surviving investigators who defeat or reseal the Ayakashi by 5:00 PM on December 15th gain 2D4 SAN. Additionally, investigators saving the two high school girls receive another 2 SAN. However, the girl who first went missing, Kaho Taketa, had already frozen and taken her last breath at the start of the scenario. Investigators may discover her at the top of the mountain, or later see it on the news.

Should 5:00 PM on December 15th pass without the investigators acting, three more high school girls climb Mt. Hodaka to perform the 'Tenjin-sama's Fortune.' They must now resist the Ayakashi. Eventually, it drains their heat and is resurrected. Hodaka City may befall a similar disaster as Heian-era Kyoto.



## Afterwords

### **Byoushin (Do Gods Dream of Digital Drugs)**

Would like to thank Aka, Lom, who helped me with this scenario, and to everyone who played Japonism before its release.

### **Lom (Chanting Sutra Network)**

I'd like to express my gratitude to Aka and Byoushin for their cooperation and playtesting, and to Asanagi for their technical advice. In particular, my deepest thanks to Aka, who, as always, provided great assistance with maps and NPC portraits.

### **Aka (Unseasonable Blooming and Minuet)**

I would like to thank everyone involved with creating this scenario. Thank you to playtesters Aian, Hikaru, Shami, Polimi, Rock, Hiiragi, Kotoha, and Musso.

I would like to thank Byoushin, who worked with the Victims of INT table for this project, as well as Lom, who helped with the setting, proofreading, NPC stats, and all manner of other troublesome things.

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